

**ROLE OF THE PREACHER'S ETHOS IN RETAINING ARMENIAN
EVANGELICAL YOUTH**

**A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
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BY

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This work is dedicated to our Lord Jesus Christ and to the young people of the AEUNA who make ministry a joy, not a job.

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

— *Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the relationship between the ethos of Armenian Evangelical Union preachers and the disconnection of youth from Armenian Evangelical churches in North America. This thesis argues that a greater number of youth can be retained if the preachers have a positive ethos with the youth. This thesis analyzes the Armenian Evangelical community and outlines reasons for both negative and positive ethos. Through personal experience, interviews and surveys, a clearer picture of the role of the preacher emerges. While there are many factors that contribute to the youth leaving the churches, the conclusion is that the preacher plays a vital role in retaining youth.

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM AND SETTING

The relationship between the preacher's character and the preacher's message is well established in both homiletical literature and societal common sense. This thesis explores this relationship by studying the pastors and the churches of the fifteen Armenian Evangelical churches in the Eastern Region of North America.

In the late 19th century, Armenians travelled by boat to Ellis Island. After they arrived in the United States, they often travelled to Massachusetts to settle in Worcester. There is the story of an Armenian man who arrived in Ellis Island anxious for the moment that would bring him face to face with his new country. "Where is America?" he asked the customs agent. "You are in America. Ellis Island is part of the United States." "No," was the adamant reply of the Armenian, "Ooster is America."¹ Worcester was the first city in the United States that Armenians settled as a community. The oldest Armenian Church was established as a prayer group in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1881. But the lure of the West and its warm winters was too much for some. As a result, many Armenians moved to Fresno, California. Over the years, the AEUNA has expanded to many other cities. The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America now consists of 29 churches and two fellowships. Churches exist in the East and West Coasts of the US as well as the Midwest. Canada also has member churches.

The purpose of this new Union is stated on the first page of the By-Laws of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America:

1. To work for the Kingdom of God on earth through the saving power of Jesus Christ.

1. Ooster is how transplanted Armenians pronounced Worcester.

2. To promote the general welfare of the Armenian Evangelical churches in North America.
3. To promote the missionary outreach of these churches.
4. To unite all ministers of this Union into one Christian brotherhood and to foster their spiritual growth and effectiveness in the Christian ministry.

This thesis will focus exclusively on the churches in the Eastern Region of North America. This includes not only churches on the East Coast but also two churches in the Midwest (Detroit and Chicago) and four churches in Canada (Toronto, Montreal.)

The Problem of Youth Disconnecting from AEUNA Churches

Over the last two decades the churches of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America have lost a significant portion of their young people. Only a handful of youth attend Sunday morning worship services. This trend becomes obvious when comparing the directories from 1986, 1993 and 2002.

Table 1: Summary of Directory Results

Directory	Youth Count	In Union Church in 2009	In non-Union Church in 2009	Percentage Retained
1986	365	45	15	12%
1993	267	40	9	15%
2002	161	56	5	35%

The results of the analysis were startling. Of the 365 youth in the directory in 1986, only 45 still attend the same church and 15 attend other AEUNA churches. Since 1986 churches in the east have connected with and kept only 16% of their young people. The figures from 1993 are no less surprising. In 1993 fourteen churches are represented

in the AEYF directory. The youth in these churches number 267. The churches have retained 40 youth and 9 youth attend other Union churches. Almost 80% of the youth have left the Union in fifteen years. Nine churches were represented in the 2002 directory. Six churches were not represented, and four of them had significant numbers of young people in the churches. As a result, the 161 youth represented by the directory is not as accurate. The churches were able to connect with and keep almost 40 percent of their youth (56 out of 161.) That is better than the other two years studied, but again, it is not fully representative of the whole of the AEYF. Many youth who were part of the Union in 2002 no longer attend AEUNA churches. The results are more noticeable because many of the churches are almost devoid of young people. On a Sunday morning, few adults in their twenties and thirties attend an Armenian Evangelical Church. This disconnection by the young people was not very noticeable in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's because there was still an influx of immigrants coming to North America. These immigrants began attending Armenian Evangelical churches and filling the pews on Sunday mornings. But the emigration from the Middle East tapered off. As the overseas influx continues to taper off, it is even more essential that the churches keep the youth that have grown up in the church.

Those who were active youth members of the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship have not made the step to being active adult members of AEUNA churches. The active youth from the 1990s are not the current leaders in our churches. Many do not attend Armenian Evangelical churches. Those who attend, attend irregularly. Of the several hundred young people who were of youth group age in 1986, less than twenty are leaders in the church. This dearth of thirty and forty year olds is a concern for the future

growth and direction of the churches which count on the younger people to be the future of the church and look forward to the day when youth become leaders and active members of the congregation. This age vacuum also concerns those who grew up in the AEYF and are still involved in the community. Those who have become young adults and have disconnected from the church are sorely missed by their friends and their church community.

The Youth of the Armenian Evangelical Union

As Eastern Region Minister to Youth, I am intimately involved with the youth ministry of the AEUNA. I have been a member of the Union for over thirty years and I have been in youth ministry for about twenty five years. I was a member of the AEYF and became a leader after several years. I have been on the AEUNA Board of Trustees for sixteen out of the last eighteen years. I was the Vice President and President of the AEYF Eastern Region. I was the AEYF National Representative on the Union Board, and was also Chairman of the AEUNA Committee on Youth for consecutive two year terms. In my capacity as AEUNA Minister to Youth, I have the opportunity to minister to youth in AEUNA churches and visit them regularly. These visits are stark reminders of the absence of thirty and forty year olds as I do not see them in the church. When I am in town, the youth have Bible studies and “lock-ins” and participate in weekend long conferences with youth from other Armenian Evangelical churches. Twenty to thirty youth often attend these events on Friday and Saturday. When Sunday rolls around, many of them are nowhere to be found. The discouraging trend is the lack of youth attendance on Sunday mornings. Only a handful of youth aged 12-30 attend the Sunday morning service.

The youth think they have fulfilled their Christian responsibility by regularly attending youth group. They are committed to their individual youth groups and also support youth group fundraisers and activities. They are friends with the young people in the youth group. They hang out at each other's houses and spend time with the youth from their church outside of church and youth activities. They are connected to the church youth group but not the church. They have no real interaction with the adults in the church, and they see no need for such interaction. The youth groups have in essence become separate little churches without the adults and without the minister.

In spite of their lack of attendance at church, the youth are committed to the greater Armenian Evangelical community. They attend regional events with great fervor and excitement. They are different than the youth of the last generation. They are more spiritually committed and they are a tighter knit community. The numbers at AEYF conferences are often larger than the regular weekly youth attendance in AEUNA churches on the East Coast. The young people support the many conferences and camps of the AEYF through the year. They recognize the necessity and importance of worship and ministry beyond the local church. The young people of the Union support the various missions of the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship and look forward to when they will be leaders in the group. They count as their friends tens of young people from outside of their church.

Using the technology of the day, the young people spend hours per week in communication with other Armenian Evangelical Youth. One of the benefits of modern technology is that youth from many states and even different countries keep each other accountable. The friendships they are building cross geographical borders. In times

past, long distance relationships were costly. Some of the youth spent more than a hundred dollars a month to keep in touch with my friends. Things have changed because there is no longer a real cost to communication. A majority of the young people have cellular phones with unlimited talk times at night and on weekends. They are in daily contact with each other; either through emails; text messages; phone calls; and websites such as MySpace and Facebook. They are not only making lifetime friends, but they are showing significant spiritual growth.

In this way, they are different than their predecessors. Many of our youth have parents who grew up in the AEYF and still attend church. It is the group in between the parents and the youth now that are disconnecting. The youth of today are more Biblically focused than both of the older groups to the point that even their parents remark about the difference between then and now. I have heard them commenting that “we never brought Bibles to conferences. These kids are different.” The young people that make up the AEYF now are Biblically literate. They understand basic theology and can articulate their faith. This was not the case even fifteen years ago. Some of the parents and leaders in the church are not as theologically aware as their youth. I have heard only one of them assert that “you can be a good Christian without reading the Bible” but this motto resonates with many of the older generation in the Armenian Evangelical church. As a general rule, the youth work to develop their faith. While they do have their faults, they believe in the need to study the Scriptures. They attend Bible studies on a regular basis and are able to converse about Biblical ideas. Some of the youth are beginning to develop accountability groups. The young people are committed to spiritual growth, the AEYF, the activities of the church, and to each other, but they do not realize the importance of

communal worship and thus do not attend church on Sunday mornings. Our churches do little to incorporate the youth into the mission, the worship service or ministries of the church.

The Churches and Ministers of the AEUNA

The churches of the AEUNA do not prioritize the retention of the youth. Some churches try to involve their youth and give significant time and money for youth work. But generally, this is not the case. Church leaders say that the youth are important. They speak of the youth as integral to the future of the church. I believe that they love the youth, but they simply do not do anything concrete to retain them. As I become more familiar with the leaders of the churches I begin to realize that they simply do not understand that youth ministry must be intentional or budgeted. Many of our churches do not include a significant budget line item for youth. We do not have one full time youth minister in any of our churches in the Eastern Region of the United States and Canada. Youth work is seen by many ministers and parishioners simply as babysitting. Babysitting can be done by anyone. It is considered youth work, not ministry. In the case of Union churches, this youth work is done by volunteer youth workers. Not always, but often, these youth workers are not properly trained for youth ministry. Many quickly burn out from the work. The turnover rate for youth workers in Armenian Evangelical churches is abysmal. There are 15 Armenian Evangelical churches in the Eastern Region of the United States and Canada. During the 2006-2007 school year there was not one youth leader or youth worker who was a leader for the 2004-2005 school year. In the Boston area the Joint Youth Group of the Belmont and Watertown churches is one of most established and solid youth groups. In the years between 1990 and 2005, there have

been 18 youth workers, 6 senior pastors, 4 interim pastors and 1 assistant minister. It is hard to have continuity in leadership, structure and teaching with such rampant turnover. Without a solid youth ministry in our churches there is a vacuum in the leadership; a vacuum that should be filled by the spiritual shepherd of the church. Unfortunately, most of the ministers are not involved in the lives of the youth in their churches. With no full time youth ministers, the role of youth minister should be undertaken by the ministers with help and support from the congregation.

In the AEUNA the spiritual growth of the youth is seen as being outside the scope of the work of the senior pastor. Other responsibilities, including visitations, church activities and community events come first. This becomes a problem because many Armenian Ecumenical functions are scheduled for Sundays. This includes functions of the Armenian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Catholic Church. As a minister cannot be two places at once, he must choose which activity to attend: church activities or the youth group Bible Studies that are held in most churches on Sunday Evening. The usual result is that the minister chooses adult ministries first and youth ministries second. He is almost forced to make this choice because the job description of most Armenian Evangelical ministers does not include youth ministry. This lack of involvement by the shepherd in the lives of the younger sheep contributes to the lack of youth attendance during worship services. If the young people feel that the minister is not invested in them, they will not invest their lives in the Armenian Evangelical Church. This was not the case in the Middle East.²

2. Most of the community is from the Middle East with a small minority having emigrated from Armenia.

In the old country, the young people who disconnected from the church in their twenties reconnected after they married. They came back to the church of their fathers and forefathers because that is where they wanted to raise their children. They brought their children to the church where they grew up. There was an implicit loyalty to the church of their ancestors. There is no such loyalty in North America. The young people of the AEUNA are routinely leaving the churches of their parents and are taking root in non-Armenian churches or not attending church at all. There is no longer a taboo against leaving your family church. As the youth of the AEUNA grow older, they do not and will not have the loyalty to the Armenian Evangelical church as their parents did. The youth have had no connection to the ministers and no connection to the church of their ancestors.

The Minister's Ethos

Contributing to this disconnect is the fact that a number of ministers have not had positive ethos with their youth. One reason for their negative ethos is the age gap between the minister and the youth. The ministers have traditionally been significantly older than the youth and either cannot or will not bridge this gap. Even some of the younger ones do not see the need to interact with the youth culture and thus do youth ministry only on their terms. This results in negative interactions with the young people. Another cause is the preaching on Sunday mornings. The older youth complain that some of the preachers eschew regular preaching on theological issues. Others are not gifted in the art of preaching and do not make the effort to improve. Another common complaint among the youth is that the preaching is not relevant to them. There seems to be no point of connection between the Sunday service and the youth. Many of the pastors were born in

the Middle East and have more “Armenian”³ leanings while most of the youth were born in North America. This often causes two different worlds to collide and bounce away from each other. The basic questions about youth ministry are: Do the youth come to the church and pastor or do the church and pastor go to where the youth are and reach out to them? Do the ministers stay in their comfort zone or do they go where the young people are comfortable? The thinking of most Union ministers is to let the youth come to them but there is no forum for this interaction. Ministers are often hesitant to spend time with youth because they do not know what to say to the youth or what to do with them. The truth is that you should “spend time with those you wish to influence.”⁴ Ethos is rarely developed without time or effort. A lack of time spent with youth leads to no time to build up ethos with youth.

The challenges of historically low pastoral ethos are compounded because the greater Armenian Evangelical community is small enough that most of the churches are aware of each other’s histories. There are no secrets and unfortunately very little aversion to gossip. The perceived character and life of the pastor is often fair game for family conversations. Sometimes this information is true, sometimes it is not, but it does cloud the judgment of the youth. They do not go into the pastor/youth relationship with a clean slate but with preconceptions about the minister. In this digital age the problem intensifies because youth in Chicago now know about the minister in Montreal and the youth in Toronto know about the ministers in Boston. The ethos of the minister is affected by the size of the community and the discussions that take place between

3. Both cultural and language related.

4. Em Griffin, *The Mind Changers: The Art of Christian Persuasion* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1976), 130.

members of this community in the greater Armenian Evangelical Union and within the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship. In summary, the problem this thesis addresses is the disconnection of the youth from the Armenian Evangelical Church. This thesis proposes that one of the solutions to this problem is increasing the ethos of the ministers with the young people in their churches. To further our understanding of the problem in its setting, we need to look at the greater youth context of the AEYF.

The Setting: The Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship

The AEYF has gone through several phases of leadership and growth since its inception. In the early 1970s, the Armenian Protestant Youth Fellowship was created within the context of AEUNA churches. Many of the parents of today's youth were active participants in the APYF. In 1978, the Armenian Protestant Youth Fellowship became the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship. The part time youth minister was Rev. Leo Tavitian. After Uncle Leo, Rev. Dr. John Mokkaosian (1984-1995) took over as the first full time Minister to Youth. The Minister to Youth is the spiritual head of the fellowship and is in charge of setting vision, programming, planning and implementation. John served in this position for 13 years and was responsible for making this position an integral part of the ministry of the AEUNA. John instituted new conferences and began a leadership program for youth leaders in the Armenian Evangelical Church. Rev. Mokkaosian was also responsible for starting an annual weeklong mission trip to various locations in the USA and Canada. He was a resource person for the youth groups of the various churches in the Union. The AEYF saw a marked increase in attendance and excitement during this ministry. When he resigned, there was a void in the AEYF leadership for several years. After a short while with no Minister to Youth, the Union

hired Rev. Kevin Kasper (1998-2000). Kevin was involved in this ministry for a little over two years. During this time he was able to minister to many people with an approach to ministry that was different than John's. With Rev. Kasper's resignation came a short period of flux. After a few months, my wife and I received the call to this ministry and through the blessings of the Holy Spirit, the work of the AEYF has expanded. The activities of the AEYF now include:

- Leadership Training Weekend (for potential leaders)
- Leaders' Retreat (for youth leaders)
- Camp Arevelk (our weeklong camping ministry)
- Camp Arevelk training (for our counselors and staff)
- Juniors' Retreat (12-17 year olds)
- Seniors' Retreat (18+)
- AEYF + (22+)
- Fall Conference
- Summer Conference
- AEYF Young Men's Retreat (new endeavor)
- AEYF Executive Committee meetings (3-5 a year)
- AEUNA Biennial Retreat (national retreat)

Since 2004, when our second child was born, I have been solely responsible for this ministry.

The Youth of the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship

The youth of the AEYF live and learn in their particular cultural context. They are predominantly middle class and Armenian. There are both first and second generation groups, but even the first generation Armenians are relatively well to do. As can be seen from the following table, the churches and church communities are located in affluent areas.

Table 2: Median Family Income

<u>Church Location</u>	<u>Median Income in City</u>
Paramus, NJ	\$97 209
Havertown, PA	\$92 200
NY, NY	\$84 648
Worcester, MA (most members do not live in Worcester)	\$44 645
Belmont, MA	\$76 507
Watertown, MA	\$74 002
Salem, MA	\$73 575
Providence, RI (most members do not live in Providence)	\$33 437
Southfield, MI	\$64 513
Troy, NY	\$39 932
Des Plaines, IL	\$65 806
Median Income in US	\$53 712
The four AEUNA churches in Canada are excluded from this table.	

The young people in the AEYF are wonderful youth who are eager to serve the Lord. They attend youth group and youth conferences. They form bonds of friendships with each other that will hopefully last through the years. These youth are zealous to learn about the Lord during these times together. Camp Arevelk occurs every August and there are many several conferences during the year. Only a day or two after camp the

countdown for the Fall Conference begins through instant messages, text messages and phone calls.

Even with all this excitement and love for Christ, many of the youth who faithfully attend these conferences do not attend church when they return home. The present and the future of the AEUNA depend on the whole community of Armenian Evangelicals in North America; the youth, the young adults and the adults of the churches. The church family, the lay leadership and the pastor are all responsible to reach out to the youth and try to retain them so that they become viable members of the Armenian Evangelical community and pass on their faith to their children.

The Armenian Culture and Parental Influence on the Youth

Armenian parents care for their children and have high hopes and dreams for them. They are willing to sacrifice for the benefit of the future generations. Yet, the pressure imposed on the youth is extraordinary. This is an almost tangible pressure not only to succeed but to be the best. Excellence is expected of the youth, even the ones who are not extraordinarily gifted. This pressure begins in the preteens and mounts as they get older. Grades, extracurricular activities, sports, family and work all play an important role in the lives of the youth. As a result, not much time is left for church or spiritual development. The parents often steer their youth away from the church because they do not wish to raise “fanatic”⁵ Christians.

For most Armenian parents, school comes first. Everything else is third with nothing in second place. Everything is sacrificed for school. Their children have to

5. Actual word used by parent who punished their sixteen year old child for coming home late from youth group by not allowing her to attend youth group for a month. However, she was encouraged to attend parties on Fridays, the same day as youth group.

succeed and if they get good grades, all else is excused. One parent said to me, “My son is partying hard at college, but he’s getting good grades.” Her older son is physically and emotionally damaged as a result of alcohol and drug use. His parents knew about his drug and alcohol abuse but wished for him to learn on his own. They chose not to impose any of their wisdom or any morals on their children. The younger son is successful academically and thus his behavior is deemed acceptable. These are two very intelligent, educated parents. They love their children but they did not learn from their first mistake because their younger son is doing well in school even during his heavy drinking and partying.

Another example is of a young woman who told her parents that she had been smoking marijuana for some time now. Her parents were clearly very concerned. However, their only concern was that this behavior had impacted her grades. The only comments they have made about it have been for the young lady to improve her academic scores. They had no objection with the marijuana. No worry about her choice of friends. No concern about her safety. But a real distress about her grades in high school because it would get in the way of going to a good university.

In this Armenian community, every child is expected to go to college. This is true even if they do not have any career aspirations or ideas of what to do with their degree. The parents almost always pay for the education, the cars, the gas and the clothes. The youth have everything, and yet many young people still work to make pocket money. The youth sometimes postpone adulthood and responsibility. Education becomes an excuse to not work or live in the real world. But more than that, education is used as an excuse to be less devoted to Christ. The parent’s high standards often include everything

except Christianity. The youth feel God wants them to be the best students and be successful and show their excellence in everything but their devotion to the Lord. This is made clear by parents not bringing their children to youth group or church because of homework or because “they were sleeping so nicely, I did not want to wake them.” It boggles my mind that even parents who are mature Christian rationalize behavior that is clearly aimed at achieving success in this world at the cost of their children’s walk with God.

Retaining the youth of the Armenian Evangelical Church will take a great deal of work. This work is not restricted to the family but must be undertaken by the whole community. The church’s role is to provide a safe environment for the youth to learn about themselves and about God. The church is where spiritual development occurs for young people as well as adults. This is the work of the church but it is also the work of the pastor. The minister as the spiritual leader of the flock is responsible for the spiritual welfare of all of the sheep in his pasture.

Research Question

In light of the problem and setting of the AEYF, namely that the youth are leaving the churches at an alarming rate and very little is being done to retain them by either the church or the ministers, this thesis-project asks “What is the role of the preacher in retaining Armenian Evangelical youth in Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Eastern Region of North America?”

Thesis Statement

My thesis is that more of the youth of the Armenian Evangelical Church can be retained if preachers have a positive ethos.

Blueprint of Thesis-Project

The second chapter outlines a theology of the ministry of preaching, a theology of the role of the youth in the church, and a theology of ethos.

The third chapter is a literature review of preaching, youth ministry and ethos. The literature reviews incorporate both classical and modern views on these issues.

In the fourth chapter, I survey the youth presently in the church to gauge their view of the minister and their reasons for staying in the church. I analyze the history of several churches to see if preachers with a positive ethos do indeed retain youth. I interview Armenian Evangelical ministers to discuss their ethos (positive or negative) and the impact of their ethos on the youth in their churches. I also form a composite of some of the churches whose ministers have a negative ethos with their youth. As this thesis-project attempts to assess the role of the preacher and his/her ethos, I suggest ways to increase the preacher's ethos.

The outcome of this work needs time to come to fruition. We will not know if this group of young people will stay in the church for more than a decade. However, I discuss the short term ramifications in chapter five as the ministers strive to raise their ethos with the youth in their churches and as the churches dedicate time, energy and resources to this very important ministry in the church.

CHAPTER 2: BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis asks the question, “What is the role of the preacher and subsequently his ethos in keeping Armenian Evangelical youth in Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Eastern Region of North America?” For the answer, we look first to the Bible. This chapter will address the biblical frameworks of preaching, ethos and youth ministry. The three sections to this chapter outline are

- Theology of the Ministry of Preaching.
- Theology of the Church (Including Ministry to Youth.)
- Theology of Ethos.

Theology of the Ministry of Preaching

God Calls Imperfect Human Beings to Minister in His Name

In Matthew 28, the church is commanded to go forth and make disciples of the nations through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. The church is responsible not only for teaching the truth but also obedience to the truth. In the tenth chapter of the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul writes:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:14-15)

Preaching is not only essential to the minister's task but also his identity. The role of the preacher is stated wonderfully by Matthew Simpson:

His throne is the pulpit, he stands in Christ's stead, his message is the word of God, around him are immortal souls, the Savior, unseen, is beside him, the Holy Spirit broods over the congregation, angels gaze upon the

scene, and heaven and hell await the issue. What associations and what vast responsibility!¹

While other factors contribute to a preacher's ethos, preaching is an integral component of a preacher's ethos. But before the preacher can preach, the preacher must be called and prepared for the work that is to be done.

A perfect God chooses imperfect people to do his work on this earth. He calls some to lay ministry and others to full time ministry. Preachers are sent as the Apostle Paul was sent, to preach the good news of a great king. Ministers seek to combine the power of this gospel with the understanding that the God as described in the Biblical witness uses faulty human beings to disseminate his message of hope. Donald Sunukjian echoes this sentiment as he asserts that "God has chosen to accomplish his purposes through the combination of human skill and divine power."² The Lord is able to accomplish his work without humanity, but God chooses humans to do his work. On the other hand, humanity cannot accomplish anything without God.

Real ministry is done through the power of the Spirit. Charles Spurgeon was clear when he wrote, "If we have not the Spirit which Jesus promised, we cannot perform the commission which Jesus gave."³ Spurgeon's understanding of the work of the Spirit is rooted in his belief about the preacher's task. He knows that "preaching is a cooperative effort between God and the preacher."⁴ The Great Commission becomes the impossible

1. As quoted in Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1980), page 2.

2. Donald Sunukjian, "The Preacher as Persuader," in John F. Walvoord, *Walvoord: A Tribute*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1982), 297.

3. Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Reprint 1979), 187.

4. Harry Farra, *The Sermon Doctor*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 30.

commission without the Spirit. Even more pointedly, Spurgeon warns, “Unless we have the spirit of the prophets resting upon us, the mantle which we wear is nothing but a rough garment to deceive.”⁵ Spurgeon continues and asserts that,

The presence and work of the Holy Spirit are the foundation of our confidence as to the wisdom and hopefulness of our life work. If we had *not* believed in the Holy Ghost we should have laid down our ministry long ere this, for “who is sufficient for these things?” Our hopes of success, and our strength for continuing in service, lie in our belief that the Spirit of the Lord resteth upon us.⁶

The mouthpiece of God, be it preacher or prophet, is called to do God’s work.

This is a familiar story but it bears retelling for this thesis. In Isaiah 6, the author speaks of the prophet Isaiah’s response to this vision of God. Isaiah sees the Lord and is immediately stricken with despair. When he realizes his unfaithfulness and uncleanness Isaiah cries out, “Woe is me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”⁷ Isaiah realizes his own inadequacies at the sight of a perfect and holy God. Isaiah is cleansed during this vision and emboldened to go out to the world. “Here am I” is his cry as he begins this new work for God. He recognizes his sinfulness but is strengthened by this vision of God’s glory and God’s holiness. Unlike Isaiah, Moses has an encounter with the living God.

Moses believes that he is inadequate to be God’s mouthpiece to the Pharaoh but after negotiating with God he takes on the responsibility of being the leader of God’s people. God calls Moses from a burning bush in the middle of the wilderness, but Moses

5. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 187.

6. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 189.

7. Isaiah 6:5. All Bible citations are NIV.

has the audacity to say, “No, I am not able.” The God who created all that is seen and unseen, the God who is speaking to Moses from a burning bush that doesn’t burn, this is the God that can do anything. Yet, Moses has the gall to reply to this great God with “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”⁸ Moses sees himself and his weakness and forgets to lift up his eyes to the God who miraculously stands before him. He realizes his inadequacy and possibly his sin but cannot and does not account for the God who can make him adequate and righteous. Both Isaiah and Moses see the Lord but with different results.

The preacher of God’s word can learn from both of these great prophets. He can stand before God with an understanding of his own inadequacies and the knowledge that God is made strong in this weakness. The great line from Bunyan comes to mind as preachers carry out this great responsibility handed down to them. Bunyan says that the preacher stands with his back to the world, hand on the Bible and eyes to the heavens. Ministers lift their eyes to the heavens to the one who is able to equip and encourage them to persevere in his precious calling even when all seems bleak and the minister’s strength is not sufficient.

The Bible shows many imperfect men who were not always obedient to God’s word and calling. Balaam does not recognize a miracle when he was sitting on one. Samson is willing to do anything for a love of a woman and a fight. King Saul shows a lack of courage and leadership during the Goliath catastrophe. Saul plots and schemes to have David killed and he ultimately has the Spirit of the Lord depart from him. Jonah ran away from a clear call from the Lord to minister to the people in Nineveh. History is

8. Exodus 3:5.

filled with imperfect men working for a perfect God. Yet these imperfect men were able to do great things through the edifying power of the Holy Spirit.

Even to this day, the Holy Spirit works through faulty individuals. Haddon Robinson tells a story that illustrates this. It was a summer that Robinson spent walking away from God instead of with him. During this time, he was asked to give a sermon. On that Sunday Dr. Robinson preached from the pulpit, but he was not ready. He was not in tune with God. Yet the Lord decided to use that message to help many. Dr. Robinson said that sermon was very well received. God used him even though “if those people knew what I was thinking when I was preaching or what I had done that summer, they would have never let me up on the pulpit.”⁹ Wouldn’t this be true for most preachers? How would preachers be received if people knew their sins? Yet we take that walk up the steps to the pulpit week after week and God’s work continues. Communities are revitalized, individuals are changed and the gospel spreads to the nations, even through less than perfect preachers.

God Equips those He Calls to do His Work

The Bible is packed with men who have had the Spirit of God descend upon them to do marvelous works which they could not have done on their own. The God of the Bible works miracles even with weak humans as his instruments because his strength is made perfect in weakness. Abraham and David might head up the long list of men and women who became great under the power of the Holy Spirit, but there are many more. During Joseph’s captivity in Egypt, the Bible tells of Pharaoh asking “Can we find

9. Haddon Robinson, “Preparing to Preach” .GCTS, South Hamilton, MA. October 1995. Preaching 1 Lecture.

anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?”¹⁰ Even a pagan king recognizes that Joseph is different. Joseph is anointed by the Holy Spirit and is able to do things that he could not do on his own. The power is from God, but the work is Joseph’s. God’s work is effective because God equips those whom he calls to his noble work. God’s people are equipped with the Spirit in order to fulfill God’s calling. This is true for today’s preacher as well as yesterday’s Bible heroes. Joseph does the work, but ultimately the power is from God. In Exodus 31, the author writes of Bezalel, son of Uri who has been filled with the “Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts.”¹¹ God calls Bezalel to work and has provided the skill and ability to “engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.”¹² God equips those he calls. Samson and Saul had the Spirit of God come upon them to carry on God’s work. Their actions are only possible through the edifying power of the Spirit.

In the same manner, the art of “preaching is a holy calling, to be done only by those so called and so equipped by God to do such preaching well.”¹³ Biblical preaching begins with the understanding that the preacher is “utterly dependent on the Holy Spirit in the work of preaching [because] all genuine preaching is rooted in the feeling of desperation.”¹⁴ The awesome task of the pulpit is not possible without the power of the Lord, but there is work to be done by the preacher.

10. Genesis 41:28.

11. Exodus 31:3.

12. Exodus 31:5.

13. Farra, *The Sermon Doctor*, 30.

14. John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 41.

Preaching is a Joint Effort between the Holy Spirit and the Preacher

The preaching task must be done with awe for the Lord and a great sense of responsibility. Imperfect ministers are working for a perfect God and ministering to people with eternal consequences. While God is sovereign and his eternal will cannot be thwarted, the preacher is also responsible. As Michael Boys asserts, “A preacher who cannot preach or will not preach, fails at the core of his calling.”¹⁵ Preaching takes time, effort, energy and much prayer. A minister does not have the right to stand before the people of God unprepared week after week. At certain times the obstacles of this life and the work of the ministry interfere with and burden the minister to the point when that week’s sermon is not as well prepared as usual. Special weeks are inevitable in most church settings but this should be an anomaly, not the norm. The preacher develops the sermon “with conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit.”¹⁶ Preachers are responsible for this momentous task of bridging the temporary and the eternal but this can only be properly accomplished with the help of the Spirit of God.

True preaching that glorifies God is also a demonstration of the Spirit’s power because it rests not on human wisdom but on God’s power.¹⁷ The strength of the sermon is found in the God behind the words, not the person behind the mouth. In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul declares that Christ sent him to “preach the gospel not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” The same Christ that died on the cross and rose again is alive and well today. The same power that raised Christ from the dead is with his followers now. It is the task and joy of the preacher to announce to

15. Michael Boys, “Preaching that Teaches (DMin Thesis-Project, GCTS, 2000), 6.

16. Dennis M. Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 88.

17. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5.

the world this message of hope, love and power. Preaching is an art that relies both on the work of the preacher and the work of the Creator. The Spirit empowers preachers to use their gifts, their energies and their lives to make the sermons come alive. One way of making this public proclamation more effective is to use the classical categories of pathos, logos and ethos.

All of the Rhetorical Tools are Available to the Minister

The preacher is responsible to use all the materials and methods at hand to get that message across. For example, Haddon Robinson argues that “without skillful delivery, we will not get our content across to the congregation.”¹⁸ Preaching is not simply about getting in front of the congregation and reading what is on the piece of paper on the pulpit. Preachers have to work hard to “maximize [their] God given rhetorical processes.”¹⁹ As God’s chosen instrument, the preacher is to “expend every effort, utilize every skill and exhaust every ability”²⁰ in the task of preaching. Preaching is work and it is often hard work. The preacher should use the resources available to make every sermon as effective as possible using all the resources at hand for the preaching task.

Historically, there have been three basic building blocks of rhetoric: logos, pathos, and ethos. For the sake of the theological framework in this chapter, here are some simple definitions. Logos is the essential substance of the sermon. It is the logical word that is preached. Pathos can be defined as passion or emotion. It is the emotional appeal to the audience often aroused through the conviction and passion of the preacher. Ethos is the

18. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 191.

19. Farra, *The Sermon Doctor*, 31.

20. Sunukjian, *The Preacher As Persuader*, 298.

preacher's character. Simply put, it is the audience's perception of "who you are as a person."²¹

Logos is an essential element of communication and thus preaching. Some would argue that "the spoken word is the most persuasive medium for creating significant change in people."²² The preacher preaches God's word from the pulpit and must speak with a purpose and with substance. The purpose of preaching "is to bring people face-to-face with the living God, to give people a sense of God and His presence."²³ This purpose cannot be accomplished without a true word from the Bible about God. Kent Hughes argues that a logos-filled sermon rests on "the inerrancy, the sufficiency, and the potency of the Bible."²⁴ The word that is preached from the pulpit should be a Word from God. It is through the careful exposition and clear explanation of the self-revelation of God that the preacher is able to remain faithful to this task. The voice of a preacher who preaches "without genuine biblical authority is sound and fury signifying nothing."²⁵ The preacher stands before his congregation and speaks God's prophetic word. This message "should be a clear, illuminating exposition of Scripture."²⁶ There is no place for the promotion of a ministerial agenda apart from the Scriptures. Logos is one essential aspect of communication in general and preaching in particular, pathos is another.

21. Kent Hughes "The Anatomy of Exposition: Logos, Ethos, and Pathos,"(Mullins Lectures, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fall 1998), 48.

22. Ben J. Katt, *The Power of Persuasive Preaching* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007), 48.

23. Timothy Keller, "Preacher," *A Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 12, no. 3 (Spring, 1994), 37.

24. Hughes, *The Anatomy of Exposition: Logos, Ethos, and Pathos*, 46.

25. Haddon W. Robinson, *Making a Difference in Preaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 35.

26. Keller, *Preacher*, 37.

Pathos is often described as the emotional appeal of a message or messenger to the audience. Pathos is a mix of “innumerable complex relationships [that] show emotion and opinion.”²⁷ It is aroused by things like the preacher’s gestures, rhythm, timing, space and pace.²⁸ A sermon can be a powerful agent of change with an emotional appeal from a preacher. The work of the preacher becomes easier if the preacher has the ability to put the “hearers in the right frame of mind so that their emotional state during the oration and subsequent deliberations are advantageous to the speaker’s persuasive intent.”²⁹ But for true effectiveness, pathos must be real. Some preachers fake their passion and conviction. Their “sweat and tears” are artificial. They might put notes in their manuscripts reminding them to be excited or raise their tone. Hughes calls those preachers “method-actors.”³⁰ Manufactured passion might fool some people but it does not fool God. Pathos is a necessary element in preaching but it must be real pathos.

Another element of pathos is audience adaptation. A preacher who knows his audience can appeal to their needs and their desires. The point of preaching is to “preach to people about themselves, evaluated and interpreted by the Bible.”³¹ Preachers cannot do this if they do not know the audience. Dennis Cahill agrees and states that “Preaching

27. Keller, *Preacher*, 44.

28. Keller, *Preacher*, 44.

29. Michael Hyde, ed., *The Ethos of Rhetoric (Studies in Rhetoric/Communication)*, (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2004), xvii.

30. Hughes, *The Anatomy of Exposition: Logos, Ethos, and Pathos*, 53.

31. Timothy A. Turner, *Preaching to Programmed People* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 97.

is not a one way street. Done well, it involves give-and-take between the preacher and the audience.”³² Audience adaptation is an integral aspect of pathos.

The third element of rhetoric is ethos. A sermon that uses ethos appeals to the audience on the basis of the character and competence of the preacher. A sermon is an event created between a preacher and an audience and ethos is essential to this event. The preacher comes to an audience with an ethos by virtue of the audiences past interactions with the preacher. Robinson warns preachers that “the image [they] project will influence [their] credibility.”³³ A positive ethos adds to the effectiveness of a sermon. Usually the audience has an already formed perception of the preacher but if there is no antecedent ethos and the audience is a clean slate, ethos can be developed during the sermon. There are very few times when an audience as a whole is neutral or ambivalent about a preacher. During the sermon ethos is built up or reduced. Having given brief definitions of pathos, logos and ethos, I will now look at three passages in the Bible to see Biblical examples of rhetoric.

Three Biblical Examples of Logos, Pathos, and Ethos

A study of three sermons in the Bible will shed some light on this discussion. In Acts 17, Luke recounts the time when the Apostle Paul speaks to the crowd in Athens. In this passage, Paul’s ethos is very low among the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. They seem to have a very low level of respect for his intelligence, his character, or his words, perhaps “because he [is] bringing some strange ideas to [their] ears.”³⁴ Paul’s ethos was

32. Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching*, 68.

33. Robinson, *Making a Difference in Preaching*, 37.

34. Acts 17:20.

also very low with the Greek people because he is an unknown Jew who is not versed in Greek rhetoric. They think of him as a “babbler” who is “advocating foreign Gods.”³⁵

The Apostle Paul stands up in the meeting of the Areopagus and says,

Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.
(Acts 17:22,23)

Paul begins his talk to this hostile crowd with an appeal to pathos. He lifts them up as being very religious. He shows interest in them and in what they believe. He engages the crowd with his knowledge of their worship practices. He reaches them where they are and begins his sermon about this new foreign God, the Christ, with an understanding and wisdom that is essential for a preacher. He flatters them and appeals to their pride about their religion. He is persistent about his message and convicted about the Gospel. His passionate appeal and explanation is a shining example of the rhetorical art of pathos. The book of the Acts of the Apostles contains another fascinating sermon, not by the Apostle Paul, but the Apostle Peter.

The Apostle Peter appeals to the sense and sensibilities of his audience with his logos. His words convey reason and logic with his opening line, “They cannot be drunk, it is only nine in the morning.”³⁶ Peter’s words convey knowledge and reason. After beginning with reason, he then uses the history of Israel in his introduction. This introduction is a lengthy reminder that Jesus is Lord and Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus is the one they crucified. He also makes reference to the Scriptures of the Jews. Peter’s

35. Acts 17:18.

36. Acts 2:14-39.

ethos as an apostle was low because Peter is now an apostle of a dead man, a self-proclaimed god who suffered a criminal's crucifixion. Yet his sermon changes not hundreds, but thousands of lives. Peter's very effectual sermon is the work of the logos empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter speaks with the truth and he speaks the truth with passion and conviction.

Peter is also passionate and filled with pathos. This is not the same Peter that denied Jesus three times. Pete now speaks with great conviction because he is a changed man. He stands fearlessly before the mob where a few short weeks ago he cowered before a simple servant girl. The Apostle Peter assures the crowd that the Jesus that they crucified has been made Lord and Christ.³⁷ The Messiah that they are waiting for is the same Jesus that they crucified. Somewhere, somehow, Peter finds a source of strength. Luke tells us that this fount of fearlessness was the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised an Advocate³⁸ and that Advocate, the Holy Spirit arrived at Pentecost. The Apostle finds divine strength in the Spirit and this passion and conviction comes across to the audience.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is a third example of a sermon with a great deal of ethos. In this sermon as outlined in Matthew 5-7, Jesus gives a framework for a new way of being. He introduces a new morality. Jesus has negative pathos as well as negative logos. He knows his audience and he knows how this will affect them. The concepts that Jesus uses are new and potentially weird. Thinking can be sin. Pharisees are not clean. No more oaths, only yes and no. These concepts are novel and somewhat unpalatable. Jesus is introducing a new philosophy that does not make sense according to the patterns

37. Acts 2:36.

38. John 14:16, 26.

of that world. It is a new dialectic given from God that seemingly goes against the traditional meaning of the Scriptures.

At the time, the sermon is effective because of Christ's ethos. His followers listen to him. They do not heckle him or run away. Yet Jesus is introducing a revolution. Jesus prefaces some of his statements with "you have heard it said." He quotes the Old Testament law and reinterprets it in the light of the new covenant he is instituting. In the Old Testament, the rich are often the ones who are called blessed. Righteousness often resulted in material blessings from the Lord. Now, Jesus is espousing a new philosophy of living. He is beginning a new world order where "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me." Curses become blessings and blessings become curses. Jesus introduces a new meta-narrative that he sells on his ethos alone. Christ's message is of a suffering servant who dies on the cross and this message is not easily received. Without Christ's positive ethos, this sermon dies a lonely death.

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in the Armenian Evangelical Community

For the most part, the speakers who minister to the AEYF are ministers from our Armenian Evangelical churches. However, at times a suitable preacher was found outside the community. In the past decade, three speakers came from outside the Armenian Evangelical union. Two were exceptional, one was very good. They were organized, articulate, and prepared. Each session flowed to the next. Their illustrations illustrated their points clearly and in interesting ways. Yet the young people in the AEYF did not like them. They expressed their dislikes during the conference and they did not pay attention during the sessions. Why? Perhaps the reason for this is because the speakers

were unknown. What began as neutral ethos became negative because they did not interact with their audience during the conference. They came, they preached, and they left. There was no chance to build up ethos outside the sessions. Good will was not built up between the speaker and the audience. While it is true that “expertise, trustworthiness, and likeableness all affect a speaker’s credibility for a listener,”³⁹ these speakers did not show the latter two. The youth did not think these speakers liked them and thus they did not like the ministers.

The speaker for another conference was also outside the Union. However, he is the brother of an Armenian Evangelical minister whom the youth like and respect. He was a very good preacher. He came, he preached and he played with the youth. He shared their free time and became one of them, at least for the conference. He understood that “youth ministry is always community,”⁴⁰ and he tried to build such a community with the young people at the conference. According to a survey taken at that conference, he was the favorite preacher for many of the youth, and his words were effective because of his high ethos. Since then, many of the youth have asked to have him back as a speaker. There were four competent preachers but only one with a high level of ethos. The youth responded to him as he worked with them and played with them. He showed interest in them and thus added to his good will.

In the Armenian Evangelical community many leaders believe that logos is the only communication mode that is necessary. Those who hold this position believe that the word of God should speak for itself without the rhetorical or persuasive influence of the

39. Farra, *The Sermon Doctor*, 137.

40. Dean Borgman, *When Kumbaya Is Not Enough: A Practical Theology for Youth Ministry* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), xii.

preacher. The preacher should not hinder the work of the Spirit. Logos is what is important and the other aspects of rhetoric, namely ethos and pathos, should not be used. No appeal is made to the emotions of the audience and on the passion of the preacher. These people believe that any attempt to persuade the audience with the ethos of a preacher is an attempt to establish a foundation other than Christ. Christ has laid the foundation,⁴¹ and preachers should only build on this foundation of the word. Similarly, pathos is a rhetorical tool that should not be used to move an audience. These ministers forget that “out of the heart flow the issues of life.”⁴² For many, audience analysis, illustrations and innovative ways of preaching build on a foundation other than Christ.

Other Armenian evangelical ministers eschew any preaching style that seeks to build a bridge between the Bible and God’s people. They preach the same sermon regardless of the audience because God’s Word does not change, and they do not wish to water down the Gospel by adapting it to different audiences. For them, a sermon is not a dynamic event between the preacher and audience but a static entity. The needs of the audience are secondary to the preaching of God’s word. The audience must adjust to the material and the preacher. Reaching the audience at its level is seen as almost pandering to the crowd. The belief is that there should be no dumbing down or selling out of the gospel. Based on such beliefs, the sermon ceases to become an interaction. It is often an oral commentary on the passage being preached. Keith Willhite asserts that “much of expository preaching is merely pedantic explanations almost to the extreme of being an

41. 1 Corinthians 2:11.

42. Jeffrey Arthurs, “Place of Pathos in Preaching,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* (June 2001): 17.

oral commentary.”⁴³ Some ministers believe that a proper expository sermon is one which goes verse by verse and explains the verses in order with very little thought about the audience.

I applaud their stance on the authority and inerrancy of the Bible, but I disagree with their opinion. I cannot subscribe to this idea that a sermon is an oral commentary. The sermon should “engage the emotions as well as the mind.”⁴⁴ Pathos is a necessary aspect of the preacher’s toolkit because “mankind makes far more determination through hatred, or love, or desire, or anger, or joy, or hope, or fear, or some other affection of mind than from regard for truth, or any settled maxim, or principle of right.”⁴⁵ If we look to the Biblical witness, we can see the Apostle Paul adapting his style and message when engaging different audiences. Jesus doesn’t speak to the disciples the same way he speaks to the crowd. I agree with Haddon Robinson when he writes that “sermons do not come into the world as outlines or manuscripts. They live only when preached.”⁴⁶ A sermon is an event between a preacher and an audience, not simply words on paper. To be effective, the preacher “must not only know the message but the people to which it will be delivered.”⁴⁷ The audience is essential to the sermonic event because “rhetorical theory perceives the audience as a participant in a multifaceted communication

43. Keith Willhite, “Audience Relevance in Expository Preaching,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1992): 355.

44. Arthurs, *Place of Pathos in Preaching*, 17.

45. Arthurs, *Place of Pathos in Preaching*, 16.

46. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 191.

47. Robinson, *Making a Difference in Preaching*, 66.

process.”⁴⁸ The preacher and audience interact with the Word to make a sermon come alive.

This interaction between audience and preacher is meant to persuade. I agree with Sunukjian and others that preaching is persuasion and the preacher is a persuader. At times, the preacher needs to persuade the flock to follow a certain path for their sake. Richard Lischer argues that “to insist on persuasion as a paradigm for the sowing and germination of the word of God simply does not do justice to the environment in which we live and minister.”⁴⁹ I disagree because the pulpit is a forum of persuasion. By the very essence of stepping into the pulpit as a leader and speaking, the preacher engages in the act of persuasion. By doing this, the preacher is being faithful to the Biblical witness. The Bible is an elegant work of literature. It is the self-revelation of a God who interacts with his creation. But at its core, it is essentially a persuasive document. The goal of the preacher is to replicate the essence of the text and the essence of the text is persuasion. The words of the sermon are indeed tools of persuasion. The words of the sermon are important, but so is the life of the preacher because the preacher’s ethos may be the most effective means of persuasion.

Preachers Incarnate Truth to the Body of Christ

The life of the preacher must reflect the words of the preacher. It has even become proverbial that “we should practice what we preach.” Stott believes that “the sincerity of the preacher has two aspects, he means what he says when in the pulpit, and

48. Wilhite, *Audience Relevance in Expository Preaching*, 358.

49. Richard Lischer, “Why I Am Not Persuasive,” *Homiletic* 24, no. 2 (1999): 14.

he practices what he preaches when out of it.”⁵⁰ There is no place for hypocrisy from the pulpit or the preacher because the preacher may be “the only Bible that some people see.” Borgman urges us to follow Christ’s example. Just as “Christ left heavenly status and security to enter human life and a particular human culture,”⁵¹ preachers are to enter incarnationally into their communities. Just as the Word of God became a human being and lived among humanity, preachers live among the people they minister to. It is for the purpose of teaching about Christ and glorifying his name that preachers preach. Often, the life of the preacher is more of a sermon than anything they say from the pulpit. Timothy Turner goes further and adds that the “authority to preach is reserved for those who exemplify Christlikeness.”⁵² This is especially important in the Armenian Evangelical community because churches are often identified by their ministers, especially when there is more than one church in a given city. The name of the church sometimes becomes less important than the name of the pastor of the church. Ministers are the visual representations of the body of Christ and must reflect the truth of the gospel with their lives. Preachers must model the words of the Apostle to the church at Thessalonica where he writes, “We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”⁵³ This incarnational approach is indeed an essential aspect of the ministry of preaching. From a theology of the ministry of preaching, we now head to a theology of the church with a focus on youth ministry.

50. John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 262.

51. Borgman, *When Kumbaya is Not Enough*, 7.

52. Turner, *Preaching to Programmed People*, 57.

53. 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

Theology of the Church

Youth are Part of the Body of Christ

A theology of youth ministry is essential to understanding this thesis. However, books on systematic theology lack content on this topic. One reason for this is that the youth are considered to be part of the universal and local churches and thus do not need a special ecclesiology. On one level I agree with this. Youth should be treated as equal members of the church. Just as there is no specific theology of ministry to seniors in the systematic theology books, there should be no theology of youth ministry. However, given that in many churches, youth are relegated to a second class citizen status with no direct contact with the shepherd of the flock, it would be beneficial to include a section on the theology of youth ministry. Books on systematic theology might not address youth but there are good works on youth ministry and the theology of youth ministry. I will start with general ecclesiology and work towards a theology of youth ministry.

Young People are Part of God's History with Humanity

The Bible contains accounts of young people and their involvement in both the community of God and the work of God. Daniel was a young man when he was captured and taken to Babylon. David interacts with Israel's history at an early age. He is anointed to be king when he is still a young man. Even Jesus' mother was in her early adolescence when she was blessed to be with her divine child. During Christ's ministry, children become an important part of the work of God. Jesus values children and allows them the freedom to come to him and take up his precious time. The New Testament "emphasizes

the importance of the youths in the acts of God.”⁵⁴ Young people are present at the “first tragic and disciplinary act in the early church.”⁵⁵ They are active and alive in the ministry of the early church. Youth are involved in prayer meetings and some have the gift of prophecy.⁵⁶ If youth are involved in the life of the Biblical community, churches should include the youth in the life and ministries of the church today.

Ministers are Responsible to Care for the Whole Body of Christ

The Bible does not condone the neglect of the young people in the church. In fact, the whole scope of the biblical witness seems to give preferential ministry treatment to the outcast, the young, the orphans, the widowed, and the downtrodden. The Apostle James encourages the church to be truly religious by looking after “orphans and widows in their distress and [keeping itself] from being polluted by the world.”⁵⁷ The catholic Church and the individual church should be place of nurture and growth for the whole scope of the children of God. The church plays “a vital role in the spiritual formation of . . . students.”⁵⁸ In the church the youth find an answer to the question of their identity. The answer is “I am a child of God, the bride of the Son, and the dwelling place of his Spirit. And this identity is given . . . by grace.”⁵⁹

54. Mark Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2001), 13.

55. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 13.

56. Acts 21:9.

57. James 1:27.

58. Jim Burns and Mike DeVries, *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry* (Ventura: Gospel Light, 2003), 57.

59. Tim Chester and Steve Timmins, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2008), 40.

In Matthew 28, the Apostle Matthew outlines Jesus' words to his disciples. The Great Commission given to the early church has no age boundaries:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(Matthew 28:18-20)

The commission to the church is to develop disciples for ministry, including youth. The "goal in youth ministry is to help young people own their faith and enable them to grow in Christian maturity."⁶⁰ Sometimes churches and youth ministers are too focused on the "great conversion." They ask for hands to go up and publicize the numbers of converts. Loving God and loving youth includes loving them enough to care for them after they make that initial decision for Christ. The commission is to make disciples, not converts. The job of the church "is to help converts develop into mature Christians."⁶¹ The goal is discipleship and "discipleship is a long-term character-building relationship that challenges people to take what they have been given by your Lord and give it to other people."⁶² Discipleship is not simply the conversion of individuals and adding names to the rolls of the church or the youth group. Discipleship includes teaching all that has been commanded. This commission does not change and has not changed in the last two thousand years.

Ministry as outlined in the New Testament is not distinguished by age. The work of the church is to all of its members and not simply those old enough to vote or old

60. Jim Burns and Mike Devries, *The Youth Builder: Today's Resource for Relational Youth Ministry*, Revised edition ed. (Ventura: Gospel Light Publications, 2002), 27.

61. Robinson, *Making a Difference in Preaching*, 26.

62. Jim Burns, *The Youth Builder* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1988), 62.

enough to financially support the work of the church. The unfortunate reality is that in our Armenian churches this is not always true. The role of the senior pastor does not include shepherding the younger sheep of the flock. Ministers who adhere to Biblical standards are responsible for casting “the vision for others in their congregation to join in the Christian formation of youth.”⁶³ But more often than not, youth are handed off to volunteer youth leaders and others in the church. It is a problem when the church and the pastor do not recognize the unity of the church and its members regardless of their age. This problem is not prevalent only in the Armenian Church, but is symptomatic of evangelism as a whole, “within evangelical ecclesiological practice [the church has] the propensity to segregate youth ministry from the rest of the church.”⁶⁴ I agree with Root that “an adolescent must be led into the life of the congregation.”⁶⁵ The church community should work its ministries and mission so that youth are not led away from the congregation but toward the community. This vision for ministry to the youth should flow down from the leadership of the church.

When a senior pastor does not take spiritual responsibility for those in their church of a certain age, the blame falls not only on him but also the church. If a minister disclosed during his candidacy that he was not able to minister to fifty year olds he would not be hired. If he announced to his potential new congregation that he really did not enjoy working with senior citizens, he would quickly be shown the door. However, if a

63. Mike King, *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry: Guiding Students into Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IVP Books, 2006), 40.

64. King, *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry: Guiding Students into Spiritual Formation*, 32.

65. Andrew Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2007), 111.

minister is not comfortable working with youth, that is the accepted norm. People assert that there are ministers who have different gifts and youth ministry might not be one of them. But ministry is not simply a matter of gifting but responsibility. The senior pastor can love the youth and delegate others to lead them, but he must ultimately take the spiritual responsibility. Jesus commands the Apostle John to feed the sheep.⁶⁶ Jesus does not tell John to only feed the older sheep. The church is the body of Christ and this body is made up of many different parts. The gospel of Christ is for all, regardless of age and the church of Christ should be the same way.

Jesus made this gospel alive by his incarnation and youth ministry at its best is incarnational. As Christ humbled himself and came down to earth, the church must humble herself and go down to the level of the youth. Youth ministry is done by people who are “inspired by God to participate in seeking relationship with all human beings.”⁶⁷ Youth ministry is often as simple as the telling of the story of Christ and how he has affected us. This is hard to do without a relationship with youth. Just as the disciples learned from walking and talking with the living God, young people will learn about Christ “because they are in regular informal contact with Christian people who model the faith.”⁶⁸ Youth ministry is an incarnational ministry. It is a ministry to young people who “need to be around, interact and live life with people in their faith community who

66. John 21:7.

67. Pete Ward, *God at the Mall: Youth Ministry That Meets Kids Where They're At* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 34.

68. Ward, *God at the Mall: Youth Ministry That Meets Kids Where They're At*, 37.

represent all generations.”⁶⁹ Youth ministry is dependent on face time with youth. Young people need both quality time and quantity time with adults who love them and are concerned for their well-being.

Church Should be a Safe Haven for all Members Including Youth

God is our refuge and strength and ever present help in times of trouble. As the body of Christ, the church should also be a center of refuge and security. “The cries of young people today are for acceptance, belonging, security, love, and justice,”⁷⁰ but the church is turning a deaf ear. Youth need a safe haven, a secure place, a refuge. They need a place to meet God. The role of the church and specifically youth ministry is to create “an environment where [youth] are able to come face to face with God.”⁷¹ In this safe environment, youth can do what they need to develop into adults. A good youth ministry “is a safe place where young people can tell their stories and hear God’s story.”⁷² Stories have a way of connecting people to each other and building a community. A safe place to tell your story and identify with others in front of the God who created all is irreplaceable. Noted youth worker Jim Burns states that “there are primarily three tasks of adolescence, to develop an identity, to establish relationships and to make life decisions.”⁷³ The church should be the place where these three tasks are facilitated.

69. King, *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry: Guiding Students into Spiritual Formation*, 35.

70. Borgman, *When Kumbaya is Not Enough*, 7.

71. King, *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry: Guiding Students into Spiritual Formation*, 53.

72. Borgman, *When Kumbaya is Not Enough*, 132.

73. Burns, *The Youth Builder*, 224.

Theology of Ethos

Having outlined a theology of the ministry of preaching and a theology of the church with a focus on youth, I will now outline a theology of ethos. I will use classical aspects of ethos: good character, good knowledge and good will, and put them within a Biblical theological framework.

Good Character

The character of a Christian, especially a pastor, begins with the character of Christ. The hymn in the second chapter of the book of Philippians is an excellent example of this character. The Apostle Paul advises those who follow Christ to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”⁷⁴ Humility and unselfishness are essential parts of character and add to ethos, just as selfishness lowers ethos. Robinson says that “perhaps no factor contributes more to legitimate authority and credibility than authentic Christian character.”⁷⁵

Authentic Christian character begins with faithfulness to the words and commands of God as outlined in the biblical witness. The Bible is filled with laws and commands for those who wish to follow God. Ministers who wish to become men and women of good character must have at their goal obedience to the commands of God. Obedience to the words of the Bible leads to more authentic Christian character increased levels of virtue and ethos.

74. Phil 2:3,4.

75. Robinson, *Making a Difference in Preaching*, 37.

However, if following the letter of the law alone guaranteed good character and a high level of ethos, the Pharisees would be our exemplars. They followed the Law to the letter and often went above and beyond the law. As Haddon Robinson says, “If you lived back then you would have been honored to have a Pharisee marry your sister. If a Pharisee ran for office, you would have voted for him.”⁷⁶ Pharisees were the cream of the religious crop because they obeyed the law. But, obeying only the letter of the law receives condemnation and rebuke from Christ who advocates a new morality.

Jesus teaches that character is not simply obeying the law; it is obeying the spirit of the law and the intent of the Author of the law. Jesus takes the old ethic and turns it around to initiate a new ethic with love at its center. Jesus tells his followers to love the Lord and love your neighbor. This is a familiar command given to Israel in Deuteronomy but Jesus’ interpretation of the law is a different one because Jesus puts relationships ahead of tradition and ritual. Jesus heals on the Sabbath because people are more important than rituals. The story of the Good Samaritan has as its protagonist not the Pharisee or the Levite, but the Samaritan. The hero, the neighbor, is not the religious follower of the law, but the one who has compassion on the downtrodden. It is not the ones who legalistically follow the Law of Israel and as a result do not touch the injured body.

Ministers increase their ethos by developing their good character and good character is developed in obedience to the spirit of the law. Those who follow the law but not the spirit of the law miss the point. They may follow all the protocols but miss the target; to love God and to love God’s people. Those who follow the letter of the law have

76. Haddon Robinson. *Pharisee and Tax Collector*. GCTS. South Hamilton, MA. March 91. Sermon at Ockenga Institute.

laws to follow and when the laws are followed, their task is finished. Those who follow the spirit of the law view the law as a little more fluid but their bar is set a great deal higher. Those who follow the letter of the law do not sit with sinners and tax collectors. They are long on ceremony and tradition and short on compassion. Loving someone is opening yourself to be inconvenienced and even humiliated. Love does not think of itself first but thinks of the other, whether that other is the God who owns all creation or the homeless man who owns nothing.

To give boundaries to this discussion, I will look at the words of the Apostle Peter. Peter's first epistle gives a blueprint of the character of a Christian leader. The ethos of a Christian, especially a pastor of God's people, is predicated on the ethical guidelines introduced in the New Testament. The Bible is full of the character traits of a Christian, but for the scope of this thesis, there has to be a boundary. According to Peter, elders and leaders are shepherds of God's flock. The flock is not ours but Christ's. The responsibility rests on the shepherd but it is the responsibility of stewardship, not ownership. Ministers do not own the flock; they only tend to it for a certain period of time. The character of a Christian leader is formed as he obeys the one who calls him to ministry and serves the ones who are entrusted to their care. Leaders raise their ethos with their Christians community by willingly embracing their roles.

Leaders are examples to their flocks; they can be good examples or bad ones. Those who are good role models raise their ethos with their community. They should be "not greedy for money" but "eager to serve." We sometimes hear of or read about ministers or other leaders who have fallen into the trap of loving money. Greed is an unhealthy trait for a leader not only because it is dangerous both to the individual and the

community but because it is rarely satiated. Leaders who are greedy for money often become stumbling blocks both to their followers and to the outside world. Leaders who are eager to serve their community and not themselves raise their ethos with their flock. Leaders who are eager to serve others will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away when the Chief Shepherd appears. These types of leaders have good character. One aspect of ethos is character and another is wisdom. Leaders of God's flock must exhibit both. In the next section, I will use the example of King David to show that good knowledge can lead to a high level of ethos.

Good Knowledge

King David's ethos with the Israelites is almost unparalleled in the Biblical witness. David is a beloved leader who is loved by his people because of his character, strength, dynamism and good knowledge, or competence, as a leader and as a warrior. Even before he is made king, David is the leader of the armies of Israel. David is a military genius and he wins victory after victory because of his wisdom. Saul was liked "But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns."⁷⁷ He is a great warrior and the people of the land understand his value to the nation. They love him and lift him up with songs of praise even at the risk of offending the sitting king, King Saul. "Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands"⁷⁸ they cry. What a witness to a powerful ethos. David is a beloved giant of a figure in Israel's history because of his many wonderful deeds.

77. 1 Samuel 18:16.

78. 1 Samuel 18:7.

King David is also an example of a leader who exhibits integrity. David sins against God, but he also exhibits faithfulness and integrity. King Saul does not like David and pursues him in order to destroy him. David has the opportunity on two separate occasions to kill Saul. With his warriors beside him, David spares Saul both times. David does not take the kill shot because he knows it is wrong. David's army and Saul's army are witnesses to David's mercy. His ethos with the nation is raised because he chooses the high road and does not kill the king who is intent on persecuting and killing David. David trusts in God's time and ultimately he becomes king. At a later date, David's mighty men take unnecessary and unbelievable risks for him. David longs for water. These men risk life and limb to sneak into this enemy stronghold and procure a canteen of water for David. He takes this unbelievable gift and instead of drinking, he pours it on the ground as an offering. He will not drink of this water because their gesture is too great. He is not worthy. Instead of exalting himself, he exalts his men and his God. In doing so he raises his ethos with them and with all who hear about this tale. These men will now follow him to the ends of the earth because he has a very high level of ethos with them because of his good character and good knowledge.

Good Will

Character and knowledge are important, but so is good will. Good will is important because ethos is an audience construct. Historically, ethos has been described as not being the character of the speaker but the perception of the character. Ethos is in the mind of the listener. A preacher's ethos will be heightened if the audience finds the preacher likeable because "a preacher's ethos is the opinion his listeners have of him as a

person.”⁷⁹ This element of ethos is very important in the life of the pastor because as we have seen, the pastor incarnates truth to the congregation. Sunukjian makes the claim that “a preacher’s ethos is high and his potential for effectiveness is great when the listener can make the twofold statement ‘I like him and he likes me.’”⁸⁰ This is especially true with youth. Youth are aching to be liked and accepted. When a young person “feels a speaker loves him, he is ready to accept almost anything the speaker says.”⁸¹ The truth is that they will like you if you like them and are likeable. The likeability of the minister is manifested in many ways:

it is in how they treat their wife and children, how they handle their money, whether they are stable in temperament and self-disciplined in eating, whether they avoid one-sided views and premature judgments, whether they are teachable and rebukeable and in the process of growing.⁸²

The calling of a preacher involves the preaching task but it is also incumbent on the minister to realize that “the Christian minister must not only declare but exemplify his message.”⁸³

79. Donald Sunukjian, “The Credibility of the Preacher,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1982): 256.

80. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 261.

81. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 262.

82. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 262.

83. Wayne McDill, *The Moment of Truth: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1999), 27.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Having laid the theological framework for this thesis-project, the current chapter now summarizes major writings that address my topic. This literature review surveys important works in two areas: youth ministry and ethos. Since no shortage of books and articles exists for either area, this chapter simply surveys highlights giving special attention to any literature that addresses both youth ministry and ethos.

Youth Ministry

For the purposes of this thesis-project, I will categorize the various writings on youth ministry into these categories: areas of agreement between the authors, the disagreements that lead to the different models of youth ministry, and the setting of the Union in this context.

Areas of agreement include:

- The church is responsible to minister to all her people.
- Youth should not always be segregated from the church body.
- Youth fall under the spiritual leadership of the ministers.
- The essence of youth ministry is incarnational.

The writings differ when it comes to the implementation of the ministries:

- Focus on family centered youth ministry.
- Youth are co-ministers with the church in the mission of the church.
- Youth group splits off and becomes a new church plant of the existing church.
- Youth are disciplined and made future leaders of the church.

Churches in the 20th century made strong use of the “farming out” approach of youth ministry. With the advent of para-church ministries which catered to the spiritual needs of young people, many churches washed their hands of the spiritual needs of the youth of their church. In this setting, “youth societies became holding tanks where youthful zeal could be channeled into harmless activities.”¹ Young people were not seen as fellow ministers or coworkers with Christ but as another chore that the church had to endure. Since chores are often delegated, churches began to delegate the ministry of their youth. Often, churches were willing to allow others to perform the duties that they themselves were responsible for. I strongly disagree with this model of ecclesiastical polity because this thesis hinges on the argument that the youth are the responsibility of the church and her spiritual leadership.

Most youth ministry approaches agree that young people are the responsibility of the church and not a separate organization. Some, like Bonheoffer “rejected the existence of anything resembling a church youth league because its very existence discredits the cause of the church as such.”² Bonheoffer and others stated that the church (composed of the leadership, pastor, and families) is responsible for meeting the spiritual needs of its all of its congregation including the youth. The Bible does not allow for discrimination of an age group in the church. All of the church should be ministered to by the church.

However, there is a confusion and Mark H. Senter III argues that this ambiguity results from the fact that in “the NT, the word church is applied to situations ranging from small groups or house churches, to all the believers in an entire city and beyond that

1. Mark Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2001), xii.

2. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 5.

to the universal church, all followers of Christ from all nations and all generations.”³ We have lost the meaning of church as a family who takes care of each other and have orphaned our youth. Who is ultimately responsible for this vital ministry? Is it the church? Is it the family? Is it para-church organizations? Is it the community? How does a church meet the needs of the youth group in the church? Or is that the wrong question? Should the question be “How does a church meet the needs of the church?”⁴

The Church is Responsible for the Spiritual Life of Her Youth

Wesley Black and others state that “the youth belong to the church.”⁵ Others echo the idea that youth are the responsibility of the church as a whole and should not be outsourced to para-church organizations or even a small handful of youth workers in the church. Senter firmly asserts that youth “cannot be franchised out to someone else for their spiritual nurture and growth, but are the congregation’s responsibility.”⁶ Youth ministry is the work and responsibility of the church proper. A good youth ministry “helps a church’s members and governing boards own that it takes an entire church to raise a Christian and not simply the youth pastor or Sunday School teacher.”⁷ The adults in the church should take the young people in the church under their wings and be caretakers of the spiritual identity, direction and maturity of these youth. In many

3. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, xi.

4. Including adults, adolescents and children.

5. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 43.

6. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 24.

7. Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* (Nashville: Upper Room, 2005), 128.

churches, “Church leaders view youth ministry as mere preparation for future leadership,”⁸ with no interest in helping to develop the identity of the youth for today.

Casey Dean agrees and says that it is time that “the church practices the art of “being there” instead of simply insisting that youth “be there” for [the church.]”⁹ Is the church there for the youth or are the youth there for the church? This is the question that the churches should ask but rarely do. Ideally, they are both there for each other as they work on their faith journeys together. Mark Senter rephrases this statement and asks “How is the church supposed to change in order for young people – to grow deep roots in the church?”¹⁰ Nell gives us a vision to strive for when he says that a church should be a “changing congregation that naturally invites the youths who are changing and who seek to be transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord, who is in the Spirit”¹¹ The church leadership and community takes active ownership of every group in the church and cares for them because they are family and not because of what they can bring to the church. As a result, the youth and adults should not be as separated as they are in most churches.

8. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, xii.

9. Kenda Creasy Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 178.

10. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 3.

11. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 18.

Youth Should not be Separated from the Church Body

I agree with other authors who believe that the church needs to fix “the structural disconnect between adults and youth”¹² in their community. King writes that “teenagers need to be around, to interact and live life with people in their faith community who represent all the generations.”¹³ I would also add that older people have similar needs and would benefit from interactions with youth. Tim Chester and Steve Timmins argue that “contemporary evidence suggests that the majority of young people do not belong in a distinctive subculture.”¹⁴ Churches should take note and provide opportunities for interactions between all cultures and age groups in the church. Chap Clark agrees that the “pastor and congregations have the responsibility to include youths in the priorities and functions of the congregation.”¹⁵ The youth of the church are part of the ministry of the church. For Clark, a functional Biblical “youth ministry must have a driving reason for being that goes beyond a baby-sitting mentality, beyond the need to keep students too busy to sin.”¹⁶ If the question “who am I?” is answered communally,¹⁷ youth need a community to develop their identity. A balance should exist between pastors, church leaders, parents, and youth leaders as they seek to minister most fully to adolescents. The

12. Mark Yaconelli, *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus (Youth Specialties)* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2006), 33.

13. Mike King, *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry: Guiding Students into Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2006), 35.

14. Tim Chester and Steve Timmins, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2008), 182.

15. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 24.

16. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 64.

17. Tim Chester, Steve Timmins, *Total Church*, 39.

church should call forth the gifts of many persons to minister to youths in all aspects of their lives. The pastor is the representative of the church and is responsible for the spiritual nurture of the entire community. Youth are part of the church community and churches should focus on the needs of the youth in the same way they focus on other groups.

Youth Fall Under the Spiritual Leadership of Ministers

Mark Senter says this best when he asserts that “pastors must be willing to be the pastor of youths as well as of adults.”¹⁸ The church leadership and pastor often meet the needs of other demographics in the church but neglect the youth. Jim Burns believes that “one of the major reasons kids drop out of church and call it boring is because no one was willing to take an interest in them or spend time with them.”¹⁹ Ministers attend meetings, engage in adult Bible studies, visit parishioners, teach and preach the Word in different locations but they often pass on the responsibility of the youth to others. The youth benefit from interactions with other members of the church community, and especially with the pastor. To facilitate this interaction, ministers and other adults should be regular attenders at youth events. Even if they are not directly involved in the day to day running of the youth groups, “youth ministry has to have the support of the church, including the senior pastor.”²⁰ The youth need to know that just as Jesus came down and lived as one of us, the pastor can do the same. Aldrich points out that “evangelism is godliness fleshed out. The Word became flesh. Jesus pitched his tent among us for over thirty years so we

18. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 25.

19. Jim Burns, *The Youth Builder* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1988), 24.

20. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 34.

could see the light.”²¹ Sometimes adults ride around in thirty foot luxury campers while the youth are pitching their tents in the field. If the Lord of all Creation modeled an incarnational ministry, his body, the church should do no less.

The Essence of Youth Ministry is Incarnational

In the last few years the belief that youth ministry should be incarnational has become almost mainstream. Mike Yaconelli laments the fact that some churches and leaders have forgotten how “to be in relationship with young people.”²² The author is quite clear that “instead of a listening ear, [the youth] find advice. Instead of a witness to their lives, they’re offered programs and activities.”²³ Relationships are essential to youth ministry. Borgman believes that “presence precedes preaching, and listening precedes speaking.”²⁴ It should come as no surprise that most teenagers are starving for real relationships, both with their peers and with adults. The church is a great vehicle for providing such mentoring relationships. What an example it would be for the community if, “the church youth group can fill the need for positive influence and intimate relationships.”²⁵ Borgman asserts that the best and maybe only model of youth ministry is an incarnational model. For Bonhoeffer, “The tissue that holds church and world

21. Joseph Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion* (Portland: Multnomah Books, 1988), 34.

22. Yaconelli, *Contemplative Youth Ministry*, 23.

23. Yaconelli, *Contemplative Youth Ministry*, 23.

24. Borgman, *When Kumbaya is Not Enough*, 19.

25. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 34.

together, maintaining their connection, is the reality of relationship.”²⁶ Burns asserts that an important goal is to “develop a relational evangelism ministry”²⁷ to youth.

To do youth ministry the minister has to incarnate Christ to their youth. Burns agrees by saying that “as the ministry of Jesus was incarnate in the gospels, so our life must be incarnate in youth ministry.”²⁸ If Christ took on flesh to minister to us, we should be there and engage the youth in a same humbling way. Ministry at its core is relationship. For Mike Yaconelli, “spirituality is not a formula; it is not a test. It is a relationship. Spirituality is not about competency; it is about intimacy. Spirituality is not about perfection; it is about connection.”²⁹ It is one thing to provide activities, entertainment, great singing or good teaching, it is another thing to love the youth unconditionally.³⁰ This type of ministry does not always take great skill or ambition or gifting, it is as simple as having the “willingness to spend time with kids and let them know we care.”³¹ Andrew Root agrees with the assessment of Ross Langmead who

provides three elements for a theologically rich relational/incarnational ministry. He explains “incarnational mission can be seen as (1) following Jesus as the pattern for mission, (2) participating in Christ’s risen presence as the power for mission, and (3) joining God’s cosmic mission of enfleshment in which God’s self-embodying dynamic is evident from the beginning of creation.”³²

26. Andrew Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry: From a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2007), 106.

27. Burns, *The Youth Builder*, 74.

28. Burns, *The Youth Builder*, 16.

29. Michael Yaconelli, *Messy Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 13.

30. Yaconelli, *Messy Spirituality*, 22.

31. Yaconelli, *Messy Spirituality*, 111.

32. Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*, 82.

I have tried to establish the idea that the church is responsible taking care of her community. Much of the writings on youth ministry assert that the church leadership needs to take an active role in the life of its adolescents. However, there are various methods of including young people in a church community. It is here that many of the authors disagree.

Malan Nel argues that a congregation has the responsibility to integrate youth into the life of the congregation. A way to integrate the youth is to not separate the youth from the rest of the church community. For Nel, "Youth ministry is not about finding an extra place for yet another ministry, but about finding a place for youths within every ministry."³³ Nel would like to see youth as full partners in the ministry of the church.³⁴ Sara Little agrees that youth are the now, the present and not the future.³⁵ Mark Dever would agree to most of what Nel is purporting as he has put forth a similar approach that includes the youth in the whole life of the church.

Devries argues that the family is integral to youth ministry.³⁶ He asserts that the youth are part of the present work of the church and are the responsibility of the church. But more than that, youth ministry is a way to involve the families of the youth in the church. He puts forth the idea that there are eight essential aspects of a church's ministry

33. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 7.

34. Theological implications of youth ministry style: Youth as full participants in the church (my words not quotes.) The congregation will never think of the faith life of youth separately from the faith life of adult members. Youth will not become a separate group within the congregation. Youth will not be neglected or ignored. Youth will be the congregation's responsibility, not merely the responsibility of the youth workers.

35. Sara Little, *Youth, World, and the Church*. (Richmond: John Knox, 1968).

36. Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2004), 29.

(to God, to each other, to the world.) He would like the youth to be plugged into these eight ministries of the church actively even at their young age.

Wesley Black would agree that youth are to be disciplined but he would like a specialized ministry to adolescents that prepares them to participate in the life of the existing churches as leaders, disciples or evangelists. For Black, youth ministry is a laboratory where young disciples are trained for the future. One of the benefits of this approach is that Black is interested in creating servants of the kingdom and not mere spectators of the kingdom.³⁷ Black is interested in making youth ministry a “whole church effort, not just something that can be done by a few youth workers.”³⁸ But he sees the youth as the future of the church and not the active present co-workers in the church.

Mark Senter III agrees that the youth are the responsibility of the whole church. He would like the youth group to be a valid viable group in the church. His goal is to provide enough resources and discipleship to the youth that they are able to start their own church plant with the youth pastor as the senior pastor. Senter proposes that the youth group become a church plant of the existing church. When a youth group is viable, it sets out on its own as a new church plant. The youth pastor becomes the pastor of this church plant and thus assumes responsibility over his flock; the youth. Senter calls this strategic approach to youth ministry “church birthing.” In most cases, the question “boils down to whether young people are the church of the future or the present.”³⁹

37. Burns, *The Youth Builder*, 111.

38. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 2.

39. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 24.

In the context of the AEUNA, the answer to the question is that the youth are the future. The churches in the Union repeatedly and adamantly state that the “youth are our future” and we have to take care of them. However, as I have stated earlier, taking care of them is often as simple as finding once a week babysitters for the youth. There is very little intentional meeting of youth needs. As we have seen over and over again, “what adolescents seek, and what they need, is intimacy.”⁴⁰ Union churches do not normally provide avenues for intimacy and mentorship. The pastors care for the youth but would not necessarily agree that “being involved in youth ministry means being available to young people to meet their needs.”⁴¹ Youth ministry is not seen as a ministry of the church, but a handful of individuals or one individual in the church. I do not wish to harbor on the negatives in the methodology or execution of youth ministry in the AEUNA but the reality is that our youth groups are suffering. As I write this, only two of fifteen churches have a weekly youth group with an attendance of fifteen or more. After a literature review of authors pertinent to the youth aspect of my thesis, I will now focus on a literature review of ethos. The vast library of resources for studies on ethos is greater than the books on youth ministry.

Ethos

Ethos is an essential element of this thesis. The basis argument of this thesis hinges on these main ideas:

- Ethos is an important tool for the speaker.
- Ethos is an audience construct.

40. Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* 2004, 134.

41. Burns, *The Youth Builder*, 58.

- And ethos can be changed.

I will note various writings on these aspects of ethos as part of this literature survey.

The Importance of Ethos

Ethos is an important aspect of the rhetorical arts and has been for centuries. As I outlined in Chapter 2, Aristotle stresses the importance of the subject and proposes three modes of proof:⁴² ethos, logos and pathos. Resner summarizes Aristotle's views and says, "*Ethos* has to do with the perceived moral character of the speaker. *Logos* has to do with the logical argumentation of the speech itself. *Pathos* has to do with the way in which the hearers are moved to emotion in the speech."⁴³ Aristotle labors to define real moral character and seems to make ethos speaker-centered. Kennedy clarifies this by saying that "basic theoretical concepts underlying classical rhetoric are enunciated by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*, which represents his lectures in Athens in the mid fourth century and is partly based on principles laid down by Plato in the *Phaedrus*." ⁴⁴

While Aristotle's work on rhetoric is essential to our understanding of the discipline, "after Aristotle the concept of ethos fell into virtual disuse in theorizing about rhetoric"⁴⁵ until the emergence of Cicero. Cicero uses Aristotle's categories of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos* while adding the new concept of antecedent ethos. In contrast to Aristotle, who conceived of ethos only as a type of proof created in the moment of

42. Also called "artistic proof or *pisteis*."

43. Andre Resner Jr., *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 19.

44. George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism (Studies in Religion)* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1984), 10.

45. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 27.

utterance, Cicero said that antecedent ethos is the reputation that the speaker brings to any given situation. Cicero believes that “Aristotle’s conception of an ethos portrayed only through the medium of a speech was, for the Roman orator, neither acceptable nor adequate.”⁴⁶ The hearer perceives the antecedent ethos of the speaker before the speaker utters a word and makes a judgment on the total package. This is in agreement with the Sophists who argue that the audience defines the speaker and defines truth. For the Sophists, majority opinion defines truth, but “truth for Plato is a reality.”⁴⁷ The Sophists are at the forefront of the beginnings of classical rhetoric. For the Sophists, “truth’s purchase price went to the highest bidder, with rhetorical artistry servings as the negotiable coinage.”⁴⁸ The Sophists are more interested in the power and art of persuasion than in the real ethos of the person making the argument. Perceived ethos is of primary importance over real ethos and perceived character is more important than real character. Plato is more interested in the real ethos of the speaker than the perceived ethos. The speaker’s ethos is important as well as the subject of his speech. The discussions on ethos are not new and have been played out between differing views over many centuries. While these authors and others through the years have differing definitions and roles for ethos, their work is essential in answering the research question of this thesis: What is the role of the preacher’s ethos in retaining youth?

Ethos is an integral element of rhetoric and as such is essential to the task of the preacher. As we have seen, for Aristotle, ethos is the moral character of the person and

46. Cicero, *de Oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton & H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 182.

47. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 13.

48. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 19.

has much to do with “the nature of the character and virtue in the speaker.”⁴⁹ Of the three artistic proofs, ethos “may almost be called the most potent means of persuasion.”⁵⁰ Augustine piggybacks on Aristotle and gives even more value to ethos by saying that the character and “life of the speaker has greater weight in determining whether he is obediently heard than any grandness of eloquence.”⁵¹ Augustine states that many do benefit by preachers who preach well but do not have the moral character. However, more people would benefit if the preachers embodied Christian virtues because “one who lives out the Christian virtues becomes more persuasive in every style of auditory.”⁵² Andrew Resner says it well when he says, “Augustine functionally rubber-stamps Aristotle’s and Cicero’s insights that the person of the preacher is the most persuasive aspect in the rhetorical situation of Christian proclamation.”⁵³ Andrew Resner stresses that ethos “becomes the yardstick for determining the virtue or vice”⁵⁴ of rhetoric and “is a significant means of gaining the conviction of one’s hearers.”⁵⁵ For Isocrates, the argument “made by a man’s life is of more weight than that with is furnished by words.

49. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 19.

50. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 19.

51. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 53.

52. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 55.

53. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 58.

54. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 12.

55. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 12.

Therefore, the stronger a man's desire to persuade his hearers, the more zealously will he strive to be honorable and to have the esteem of his fellow citizens."⁵⁶

Many modern authors echo the idea of the importance of ethos. For Johannes Bauer, "The preacher takes center stage in preaching."⁵⁷ Baumann agrees and says, "Effectiveness in the pulpit is indeed tied to the life, the integrity, the Christian character of the man who declares the gospel. Good men are full of their message and will be heard."⁵⁸ Fant sums up ethos as being trustworthy and credible because these two factors lead to charisma, and says that unless the preacher is "perceived as both trustworthy and expert by the people with whom he ministers, his influence will be seriously impaired."⁵⁹ Donald Sunukjian concludes that "effectiveness [is] not due to what is said, but to who said it."⁶⁰ For Em Griffin, it is equally clear that "the messenger makes the message,"⁶¹ and if the messenger has good character, the resulting "credibility wins a hearing."⁶² This type of thinking should not be a novel thought as we have proverbs that echo it: "What you are speaking so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying." The preacher's ethos is an

56. Isocrates, *Antidosis*, trans. George Norlin, Loeb Classical Library (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928-1945), 1.277-78.

57. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 61.

58. Baumann, Daniel J. *Introduction to Contemporary Preaching*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 42.

59. Clyde E. Fant, *Preaching for Today*, Rev Sub ed. (Cambridge: HarperOne, 1987), 112.

60. Donald Sunukjian, "The Credibility of the Preacher," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1982): 255.

61. Em Griffin, *The Mind Changers: The Art of Christian Persuasion* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1976), 115.

62. Griffin, *The Mind Changers*, 131.

integral element of the art of rhetoric. Furthermore, a number of writings on ethos propose the idea that ethos is an audience construct.

Ethos as an Audience Construct

A majority of writings on ethos propose the thesis that ethos is constructed by the audience the speaker interacts with. James Andrew asserts that “speakers and audiences interact in such a way as to ‘define’ the person who is sending the message.”⁶³ Without an audience, the speaker’s real character is almost irrelevant. Stephen Toulmin argues that “rhetorical theory perceives the audience as a participant in a multifaceted communication process,”⁶⁴ and although he did not have ethos in mind when he wrote that, Toulmin’s statement nevertheless is pertinent. The audience thus defines and constructs the ethos of the speaker. Ethos is “the composite perception an audience has of a speaker.”⁶⁵ And as Em Griffin states, perception influences persuasion: “If we believe we are listening to a good man, his cause will seem probable.”⁶⁶ Haddon Robinson states that “credibility comes from the way people perceive a pastor’s character and this may or may not align with what the pastor really is.”⁶⁷ Robinson does not believe that this is the best or most efficient way to persuade but knows that this is indeed reality. James Andrew agrees and says that “the perception an audience has of a speaker is what

63. James Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism* (New York: Longman, 1990), 37.

64. Keith Willhite, “Audience Relevance in Expository Preaching,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1992): 358.

65. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 37.

66. Griffin, *The Mind Changers*, 116.

67. Robinson, *Making a Difference in Preaching*, 37.

finally determines ethos.”⁶⁸ Andrew also asserts that the “speaker’s reputation is made up, in part, of an audience’s beliefs about the speaker’s intelligence and experience.”⁶⁹ The audience has the role of defining the character of the speaker.

If ethos is an audience construct, the real character of the speaker is of secondary importance. Different audiences find different aspects of a speaker’s character important and thus a speaker can project an image to help a particular audience view them in a better light. Alan Brinton agrees that it is the “appearance of good character rather than good character itself”⁷⁰ which takes precedence. Harvill assents with the contemporary notion that “ethos has turned into an audience variable, no longer a speaker’s [actual] character.”⁷¹ Ethos has become “a projected character, in view of the target audience’s character.”⁷² Cicero, in *De Oratore*, gives helpful advice to the speaker. He says that it is “very helpful to display the tokens of good nature, kindness, calmness, loyalty . . . to paint their [the speaker’s] character in words as being upright.”⁷³ Quintilian posits that “ethos in all its forms requires the speaker to be a man of good character.”⁷⁴ But he seems to waffle as he adds that it is most important that the speaker either possess or be thought to possess the virtues that make up good character.

68. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 40.

69. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 38.

70. Alan Brinton, “Ethotic Argument,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 3 (1986): 246.

71. Jerry Harvill, *Aristotle’s Concept of Ethos as a Ground for a Modern Ethics of Communication* (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1990), 129.

72. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 27.

73. Cicero, *de Oratore*, 281.

74. Quintillian 1875-1876, VI.ii.17-18.

There are some who say that it is not the perceived character that is important, but the real character of the person. This was Plato's belief. For the Sophists, the phrase "perception is reality" resonates deeply, Plato however, would disagree. Plato believes that a speaker's real character and real ethos are essential to the rhetorical art. Socrates would agree because "integrity of character is more important for Socrates than the appeasing of social context."⁷⁵ Jerry Harvill argues that Aristotle is more interested in real character than perceived character. Harvill writes that "for Aristotle, ethos is no more detachable from the individual than the soul."⁷⁶ Andrew Resner Jr. argues that for Plato, "The rhetor is a witness to the Truth and as such must be truly a good person."⁷⁷ Haddon Robinson echoes this idea when he says that "no factor contributes more to legitimate authority and credibility than authentic Christian character."⁷⁸ For Robinson, it is not the perception of the preacher's ethos but the reality of his character. Authentic character comes through after repeated contacts with the community. Robinson continues and says that the church wants "credibility in the pulpit, genuine character has to come through."⁷⁹

In this chapter, I have given a short literature review on the importance of ethos and the idea that ethos is an audience construct. One of the important aspects of this thesis is that ethos can be changed.

75. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 14.

76. Harvill, *Aristotle's Concept of Ethos as a Ground for a Modern Ethics of Communication*, 129.

77. Resner, *Preacher and Cross: Person and Message in Theology and Rhetoric*, 33.

78. Craig B. Larson, ed., *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005), 215.

79. Larson, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, 215.

Ethos can be Changed

If ethos is measured by the perception of an audience, it can be improved by changing the perception of the audience. What can preachers do to change their ethos? This is a complex answer that would take a thesis project of its own to answer. For the sake of this discussion, I will contain the literature review to a few points.

Preachers have the ability to change their antecedent ethos. James Andrew is clear that “simply being identified in an audience’s mind as an expert can enhance a speaker’s ethos.”⁸⁰ If a community or audience is not familiar with a preacher, a proper, well-rehearsed introduction by someone with a good ethos with the audience is extremely important. Griffin suggests an “introduction from a credible source [because] ethos can be transferred.”⁸¹ Preachers have to take into account their audience and try to discern how the information the audience has about them will be interpreted by the audience. Some preachers try to improve their ethos by the content of what they say regardless of their antecedent ethos. Others find a point of unity between themselves and the audience and try to build ethos out of that.

Preachers can improve their ethos by changing the “audience’s perception of the depth and genuineness of the speaker’s interest in them and their problems.”⁸² A speaker who can identify with the audience is a speaker with a head start in the race. Em Griffin suggests that speakers “find points of agreement between”⁸³ them and the listeners. As

80. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 38.

81. Griffin, *The Mind Changers*, 129.

82. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 38.

83. Griffin, *The Mind Changers*, 129.

Andrew states “a speaker who is seen as “one of us” may be viewed in a friendly light.”⁸⁴ Even better is when the audience “can make the twofold statement, “I like him, and he likes me.””⁸⁵ Preachers who project the idea that they have nothing to gain from the rhetorical event and they are simply interested in the welfare of the community will increase their ethos. A preacher who is not out for himself and “who freely pushes others to occupy the spotlight, is ... a man who is liked and listened to.”⁸⁶ Being liked leads to higher levels of ethos. One way of promoting a better ethos is to spend time with the audience because “deep trust requires long-run proximity.”⁸⁷ Another approach is self-disclosure. Griffin believes that as preachers engage in appropriate self-disclosure, “Human warmth escapes and people begin to respond in trust.”⁸⁸ Arthurs and Gurevich agree that “a display of trust honors listeners and prompts them to trust in return.”⁸⁹ This trust has the ability to increase ethos.

To increase ethos, preachers can change their style of delivering their message. Often preaching professors encourage preachers to smile from the pulpit. People like people who smile at them and it gives the listeners the idea that this preaching event is pleasant for them. However, appropriate facial expression is even more necessary than the one-size-fits-all advice to smile. On more than one occasion I have seen ministers

84. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 39.

85. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 261.

86. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 262.

87. Griffin, *The Mind Changers*, 129.

88. Griffin, *The Mind Changers*, 131.

89. Jeffrey Arthurs and Andrew Gurevich, “Theological and Rhetorical Perspectives on Self-Disclosure in Preaching.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157/626 (April-June 2000): 97.

announce sad news or introduce a sorrowful illustration with the brightest of smiles. The way the speaker looks and acts and speaks is essential to ethos. If an audience “judges a speaker’s voice to be harsh, or nasal, or deviating in some way from ‘normal’ quality, the speaker’s ethos will suffer.”⁹⁰ A change in voice quality can increase ethos. A reduction in mannerisms that are distracting can also enhance ethos. Sunukjian proposes that “a preacher’s ethos is the opinion his listeners have of him as a person,”⁹¹ and that “speakers communicate competency and gain credibility by means of an attractive appearance, a fluent delivery, an organized message and an evident awareness of human events.”⁹² For Sunukjian, clothing and grooming are important aspects of ethos and improving both has the capabilities of improving ethos. In this ethos arena, we cannot shortchange the importance of dynamism and enthusiasm. Griffin is clear that “a genuine excitement about what you believe will stand out in bold relief.”⁹³ Enthusiasm and conviction about the text and ultimately the author of the text can work wonders in enhancing a preacher’s ethos.

In the context of the AEUNA, I believe that perceived ethos is almost equivalent to real ethos. The youth know the pastors and the families know the pastors. As we have seen, the community is small and intertwined in a way that opens up the lives of the preachers to the churches in the Union. The community is aware (as much as anyone can be) of the real character of the preachers and thus they have more information with which

90. Andrew, *The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism*, 44.

91. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 256.

92. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 257.

93. Griffin, *The Mind Changers*, 131.

to make a decision about the preacher's real ethos. Most of the ministers have gone from church to church and the community knows their history. The good news is that our newer ministers have higher levels of ethos than the previous ones but everyone can increase their ethos. It is important that the shepherds of the churches of the AEUNA educate themselves not only on the tasks of the preacher but also on ways to increase their ethos. I will suggest ways of this specifically in the coming chapters and will present the findings to the ministers at a pastors' retreat. Speakers can do all the little things to enhance their ethos but in the end, it is a preacher's walk with Christ that is of utmost importance.

I will end this chapter with one of my favorite quotations from Donald Sunukjian who writes, "The perception [of the preacher's] character depends on the work of God in his life. And in the end, it is this work that will make all the difference in his effectiveness. How good we are as preachers depends-not altogether, but (make no mistake!) primarily- on how good we are as men."⁹⁴

94. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher*, 261.

CHAPTER 4: PROJECT DESIGN

The problem and setting of this thesis were presented in previous chapters. The setting is the cultural and spiritual confines of the Armenian Evangelical churches of the eastern region of the United States and Canada. The problem is that the youth are routinely disconnecting from this community. This thesis argues that the youth can be retained if the pastors have a positive ethos with the youth. In chapter two I outlined a theological framework for this thesis. In chapter three I reviewed the literature of the main topics: preaching, rhetorical theory (especially ethos), and youth ministry in a church setting.¹ In this chapter I outline the project design which consists of four areas:

- Comparison of directories from past years to current ones.
- Analysis of churches that are successful in connecting to their youth.
- A composite of churches that have lost their young people.
- Several surveys of the Armenian Evangelical community to determine the value of ethos in the community.
 - Survey of AEYF Plus (aged 22 and up)
 - Survey of general AEYF (12-21 mostly)
 - Survey of ministers about ethos
 - Survey of lay people (mostly youth) about the ethos of their minister.

These four areas help me argue my thesis: that youth can be retained if ministers have a high ethos. I first demonstrate that attendance has dropped, then I discover why that is the case through interviews with people who have left. I also survey those still in our

1. When I use the word church in this chapter, I mean the adult leadership of the church and not necessarily the church family.

churches to gauge the level of their confidence in the ministers in the churches now. I give an overview of several churches that have retained youth and a composite of churches and ministers who have lost their youth. Both of these overviews help establish my thesis. In the next chapter I suggest ways to improve ethos so that we can retain our youth.

Comparison of Directories Past and Present

This thesis hinges on the fact that youth have disconnected from the church. The first step is to analyze AEYF directories from three different years to see if indeed the young people have disconnected from the churches. The results were tabulated and discussed in the first chapter. This was a very important aspect of my project design because it shows that the youth are indeed disconnecting from the Armenian Evangelical Church. The next survey describes the young people in the AEUNA who have chosen to remain in the church.

AEYF Plus (ages 22 and up) Survey

The purpose of this survey was to find out how this group felt about their ministers. Most of the youth who filled out this survey have grown up in the Armenian Evangelical community. They attend church regularly and many serve in leadership capacities with the youth group or in the church. This survey was given at an AEYF Plus Retreat to a group of young people aged 22 to 32. This survey was important because this group of youth attends church regularly, and I expected them to put a high value on the ethos of their minister. The results of the survey are recorded in Appendix E. This survey backs up this thesis because these young people who have stayed in the church and are attending AEYF Plus conferences have a healthy respect for their ministers. Three AEYF

“Plus” Retreats a year are planned for those youth aged 22 and up. This is a new ministry aimed at keeping the twenty- and thirty- something young people in the churches. We started these “Plus” retreats there is a definite drop off in numbers in churches between AEYF conferences (ages 12 -25) and AEYF Plus conferences (ages 22 and up.) This age group is the one that we have lost historically and my goal was to keep them connected to their churches and the greater church community. The average attendance at AEYF conferences is between 75 and 100, and the average attendance at AEYF Plus conferences averages between 15 and 25 people. I expected these youth to rate their ministers high because they are the ones who have stayed in our churches.

As expected, the ministers scored high in this survey. The survey asked the young people to rate their ministers from “really bad” to “exceptional” in 24 areas. The survey was to gauge the perceived ethos of the ministers in the areas of “competency,” “integrity,” and “caring.” These categories represented “good knowledge,” “good character,” and “good will.” The answers to this survey surprised me slightly. I was expecting the ministers to be valued by the youth but not as much as they were. I was especially mystified by the question which asked the young people to rate the ministers on their “love for youth.” The ministers scored a higher percentage of “exceptional” on “Love for youth” than “Love for family,” and “Love for congregation.”

Table 3: AEYF Plus Survey

Love for youth	Love for family	Love for congregation
42 %	32%	24%

In my perception the opposite is true; the ministers have a greater love for their families and adult congregations than the youth in their church. I don’t know if the young

people wrote what they thought I wanted to hear but the number is very high. It also doesn't correspond with the lower score of "Time Spent with Youth" which is 22%. As we have seen throughout this thesis, youth ministry is incarnational. As a result, good youth ministry takes time; time in prayer, time in preparation, administration, and much time with the youth. From the analysis of youth ministry in the previous chapters, it is clear that youth "who remain active in the group will stay in the group because of healthy and genuine relationships."² The lack of youth ministers in the community makes the pastor's work and relationship with the youth even more important. Even though the ministers do not spend much time with their youth, they scored high on the three components of ethos. There were only a small number who scored "really bad," or "unsatisfactory."

The categories where they scored low were:

- Integrity
- Minister's kids
- Fashion Sense
- Trustworthy with a secret
- Honesty

However, for most of the ministers, the levels of integrity and honesty were also very high in this survey. The ministers did well in the categories of "Trustworthy with Money" and "Trustworthy with a Secret." However, one fifth of ministers were still

2. J. Vernon McGee, *Jesus: Centerpiece of Scripture*, 1st Edition ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 84.

“Less than Satisfactory” in keeping a secret. I believe that all ministers should score very good to exceptional in this category. The same should be said about money.

A minister should always be trustworthy with money. This is essential to a ministry. In the last ten years, there have been at least three ministers in the Union who lost their credibility with the youth and with their congregations because of their dealings with money. I have heard the youth make jokes about their church and their minister only caring about money.

I also put “Hard Working” in this category of good character. The ministers scored well enough in this category, but it is telling that the highest totals were in the ranking of “Satisfactory.” There should be no doubt in the minds of the parishioners that the minister is working hard. Hard work, trustworthiness with money, and trustworthiness with a secret are all elements of good character. The youth value these traits and yet still think highly of their ministers. It could be that they value the other aspects of their ministries.

Good knowledge is another component of ethos. The ministers ranked high in this aspect of ethos. They have high levels of ethos whether it is worldly wisdom or Godly wisdom. Their teaching scores were higher than their preaching scores but many scored well in both categories. Across the board, in all the knowledge categories, the ministers scored well and have high ethos with regard to their good knowledge.

Good will is another component of ethos. The ministers scored high on this category also. The young people think the ministers are for the most part unselfish and zealous for God’s word. They esteem the pastor’s love for their family, congregation and

the youth in their church. They find the ministers likeable and think the ministers like them.

I expected the ministers to score high in this survey because it was a survey of people who are still in the churches. However, they scored much higher than I thought they would. They scored high in good will, good character and good knowledge. The youth think highly of their ministers. The youth who filled out the next survey are also in the church, but they are younger than the AEYF Plus group. I expected this group to value their ministers in the same way to the AEYF Plus group. My thesis is that the kids will stay if they like the minister and these are youth from our churches that are staying. The next table shows the pastoral tenures of the active ministers in the AEUNA.

Table 4: Length of Senior Ministers in Present Pastorates

Church	Years Pastor has been there
Chicago, IL	No Pastor
Detroit, Mi	5
Havertown, PA	3
Salem, MA	6 (Part-time minister)
Providence, RI	Interim (short term but familiar to youth.)
Cambridge, ON	25 (no youth group, no AEYF involvement ever)
Montreal, QC	No Pastor
New York, NY	Interim (3 years)
Troy, NY	Interim (3 years)
Worcester, MA	Pulpit Supply (1 year)
Belmont, MA	6.5
Montreal First, QC	5.5
Paramus, NJ	7
Toronto, ON	4
Watertown, MA	6.5

The survey results show a high level of ethos for the ministers. These findings seem to be in direct conflict with my thesis which lists low ethos as one of the reasons for the youth disconnecting from the church. However, the results can be explained in two ways. One, the youth doing the surveys are predominantly ones who have stayed connected to the church and thus would have positive views of the ministers. Second, as can be seen from the above table, the ministers in our churches are very new to their church communities. The youth that have disconnected have for the most part not disconnected on their watch. My study goes back to the mid-eighties when many of these ministers were not in ministry and some were youth themselves.³

Survey of AEYF youth aged 12-25

The purpose of this survey was to gauge the level of the minister's ethos among young people aged 12-25. It was done at an AEYF general conference in Belmont, MA. Sixty three youth took the survey which is attached to the thesis as Appendix F.

The survey included questions about their church, their minister, and their favorite speaker. Youth at this conference came from twelve of the fifteen churches in the Union. Over seventy percent of the youth attend church every week. The good news for Armenian Evangelical ministers is that the youth in their churches have positive views of the minister as an example of a Christian.

Table 5: AEYF Fall Conference Survey

Very Neg.	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Pos.
2	4	7	17	31

3. I could have surveyed those who have left but chose not to do that for the sake of the community and my relationship with the other ministers.

Only six out of sixty one have negative views of their minister. Seven of the youth have neutral views and a large majority (48) has positive or very positive views of their pastor. The ministers know the youth by name and have been to the houses of a majority of the youth. Here are some positive characteristics of their minister that the youth listed.

Table 6: Positive Characteristics of AEUNA Ministers

Positive Characteristics of AEUNA Ministers		
Polite	Loyal	Sincere
Hard working	Honest	Faithful
Fair	Scholar	Nice
Funny	Enthusiasm	Understanding
Theological	Friendly	Business acumen
Homiletic Skill	Happy	Believer

However, the results of the survey were not totally positive. Twenty out of the fifty seven would not trust their minister with a secret. When it comes to important issues, the youth do not turn to their ministers.

The scores in the next table are interesting. The ministers scored high in many of the categories. However, it is a telling sign that almost half of the youth do not value the virtue of their ministers. This survey shows a high value to the component of good will (niceness and caring) and good knowledge (intelligence, preaching, and wisdom) but virtue and competence are low.

Table 7: Ministers and Their Ethos

Wisdom	Compe- tence	Intelligence	Virtue	Niceness	Caring	Good Preaching
41/63	35/63	48/63	<u>32/63</u>	55/63	48/63	48/63

The next table shows characteristics of a minister that the youth value. Caring and wisdom are at the top of the list. Young people want a minister to care about them. They also want someone with wisdom who can help them with issues that they might have.

Table 8: Top Quality that AEYF Youth Desire in a Minister

Caring	Preaching	Virtue	Wisdom	Teaching	Intelligence
17	10	4	16	10	3

Table 7 is interesting because it might explain why the youth complain to me about the integrity of their ministers yet still rank them high in the surveys. They have said “I do not trust my minister; I think he’s out only for himself.” Others have expressed that they do not believe much of what their minister says. As can be seen, virtue ranks almost last in this survey. Out of the six characteristics, the youth listed virtue as low on their list of desired characteristics. The youth like their ministers because they rank them high in the other categories but they do not see virtue as important.

In the first chapter, I analyzed the different AEYF directories to see if the youth have disconnected. The result was that more than 80% of the youth in the 1986 directory no longer attend AEUNA churches.⁴ The results from later directories are not as stark but still support the thesis that the youth have disconnected from the community. In the

4. In an online survey 86% of respondents (42 out of 49) know “youth who have left an AEUNA church because they did not value the character of the minister.”

second section, I surveyed the young people of the AEYF to find out their perceptions of the ethos of their ministers. As expected, the youth place a high value on the ministers' ethos. In the third section, I will analyze the churches that have been successful in connecting to their youth.

Analysis of Churches that have Retained Youth

The three churches that have retained the most youth are the First Armenian Church of Montreal, the First Armenian Church of Belmont, and the Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church of Providence. I have also added the Armenian Church of the Martyrs of Worcester I am intimately familiar with these churches, having served in pastoral roles in three out of four.

These churches are very different in their makeup. The FAC of Montreal is comprised of mostly first generation Armenians with the worship services in Armenian. The FAC of Belmont and the AEEC both have a majority of second and third generation Armenians with the services in English (and a short sermon in Armenian.) The members of the ACM of Worcester are equally first and second generation Armenians.

The FAC of Belmont is the church that is most successful in retaining the twenty and thirty year olds in the church. The minister hosts a Bible study for that age group every week at his house and spends time in fellowship with them. His youth get a chance to interact with him and his family and as a result, his ethos is high. The young people speak about how much they like and respect the minister. The youth from the church have said "I like him because he opens his home to us." The minister is very committed to his family and often speaks openly of the challenges of being a husband and a parent. The young people have expressed their respect because "he's a caring family man."

Another youth was able to go and discuss a very intimate problem because “I trust him and he speaks to me openly.” He is also able to “ask for help when he needs it.”

Knowing when to ask for help is a sign of wisdom and the youth recognize this. They seek his wisdom and value his opinion. They also regularly request him as a speaker for AEYF conferences because “he really understands theology and the Bible.”

The youth of the AEEC of Providence have not had the luxury of regular youth group like the FAC. They have grown up without a youth group but have remained in the church as adults. Why is this? Perhaps because their ministers cared about them, and just as importantly, the church leadership has shown that the youth are important. The church financially aids the youth so that they can afford to attend conferences and retreats. In fact, the church is more than generous with the youth. Last year the minister wanted to have a room for the youth. At that point they did not even have a youth group. The church agreed to allocate a significant sized room in their church building for the youth. They also furnished the room with a projector, video games, foosball and table tennis tables to make the youth feel at home. The ethos of the minister and the adults in the church was raised not only in the eyes of the youth, but in the eyes of the community. This last paragraph seems to be unrelated to ethos but when compared to how money is allocated in other churches, this ties in to the thesis. The minister in this church had a vision for the youth and was willing to allocate appropriate resources to it. The youth in the church look at him differently, as do the youth in other churches. The FAC of Montreal is quite different in its theology, its worship style, and its language. There was a stretch of many years where the church did not have a minister. During this time the youth group grew and developed new leadership from within the church without the

benefit of a minister or any paid staff. The lay leadership was strong enough to carry on the mission of the church until they found a leader for their flock five years ago. In that time has rejuvenated the church and has continued to grow the youth group. He sacrifices himself for his flock and supports all youth activities. For example, on a couple of occasions he drove the youth to conferences on Friday and drove back on Saturday to be ready for the worship service. He has a parishioner who is in jail in Providence, and he visits him as much as he can. On many occasions this man has driven to Providence (6-7 hour trip one way) in the morning and driven back at night. His ethos is very high in the church and with his youth. They speak about him with glowing words of admiration because “he attends our youth group activities” and “he surely knows how to pray.” They value his hard work and “really like how he has raised his children” who all attend church.⁵ The young adults and youth of the church are actively involved in the worship services of the church. The church sings contemporary worship songs (led by the youth) in Armenian and English even though every other part of the service is in Armenian. This is relevant to the thesis because many ministers do not share the pulpit with anyone, even other ministers. When the youth see that their minister is valuing the young people by allowing them positions of prominence, their ethos is raised.

These churches are different in their worship styles, facilities, and resources. Some are financially stable and others are barely surviving. The ministers are also different in style, gifting, and temperament. Yet these have managed to retain a greater percentage of youth than other churches in the AEUNA because the ministers invest in the lives of the youth. Even if they do not lead the youth group, they attend youth

5. A significant percentage of the children of older AEUNA ministers do not attend AEUNA churches.

activities and know the youth by name. They value the youth as individuals and cast the vision that the Christian formation of the youth is the responsibility of the church. This is not always articulated, but it is implicit in the work of the ministers. Jim Burns writes that “students who remain active in the group will stay in the group because of healthy and genuine relationships.”⁶ These churches have succeeded in building relationships with the youth and “relationships are the key to effective youth ministry.”⁷ It is obvious that they can do better as they are still losing over half of their youth, but they have the right approach. The ministry to the youth of the church has to “have the support of the church including the senior pastor.”⁸

Although this thesis does not explore other factors influencing retention of youth, focusing only on the ethos of the minister, I acknowledge that human behavior can never be reduced to single causes. In particular, I believe that another factor that helps retain youth is the church community valuing the youth in the church. This includes prioritizing them in the budget and the showering attention on them to let the youth know that they are important. The churches that retain youth send chaperones with the youth to conferences and provide rides for them when they wish to attend retreats. They provide church facilities and moneys for youth activities. More importantly than money, they take care of the youth. These churches would agree with Wesley Black that youth “cannot be franchised out to someone else for their spiritual nurture and growth, but are

6. Jim Burns, *The Youth Builder* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1988), 17.

7. Burns, *The Youth Builder*, 21.

8. Mark Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2001), 24.

the congregation's responsibility.”⁹ In the Worcester church, I have heard the story many times of when the youth trekked to California for a conference in the 1970's and the youth, now middle aged, still speak of their chaperone who allowed them to go to the conference. In the Providence church where I served for two years, one gentleman who is now in his eighties was constantly introduced by the middle aged leaders of the church as, “He was our chaperone every time we went to a retreat. He drove us and took care of us.” In both cases, the youth at the time felt that the church loved them and valued them enough to provide leadership for them. Many youth in other churches do not have this luxury.

Composite of Churches and Ministers who have a Negative Ethos with Youth

The previous section contains an analysis of churches that have connected to their young people. It gives insight into what helps retain Armenian Evangelical youth. The current section now turns the focus from positive churches to negative ones. I describe churches and ministers who have a negative ethos with their youth. I have chosen to not identify particular churches and ministers, but instead have created a composite image. As has been presented in this thesis, youth ministry should be the incarnational ministry of the whole church community. But ultimately, the senior pastor is responsible for the spiritual life of the youth. Ministers are responsible for developing youth leaders and being interested in the lives of the youth in their church as they are responsible for the adults in the church. The absence of youth ministers and volunteer youth leaders in the AEUNA makes the role of the pastor much more important. Unfortunately, some of these ministers have less than ideal ethos. This next section outlines some of the reasons

9. Senter, *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, 57.

for the low levels of ethos. Some churches and ministers show by their actions that they do not value the youth in their church.

This composite picture shows ministers who lack courage (a quality related to ethos), integrity in preaching the whole counsel of God, or do not themselves have a vibrant relationship with the risen Christ. There have been ministers who have denied the resurrection of the Lord and have taught on the non-existence of hell. Another example is a minister who gave Bible study handouts which stated “God is confused by the appearance of evil.” Theological unorthodoxy is valued by the youth in our churches and this type of borderline heretical teaching lowers the ethos of the ministers.

Another issue is the preaching of the ministers. I did not include this topic in detail in the surveys because I did not wish to be seen as attacking the ministers. However, this has become a big issue in the AEYF. The youth regularly comment on the both the topic and style of the preaching in the churches. The preaching ministry of the pastors is very important to the youth. I have heard teenagers comment when they hear a different preacher that “that’s the first time the Gospel has been preached in the church,” and “That’s the first sermon that I was able to focus on and not be bored.” I have observed that when ministers forsake the preaching and teaching of sin, their ethos is lowered.

Both the minister and the congregation are responsible for this lack of proper teaching. As J. Vernon McGee says, congregations like to hear about the “sins of the Moabites, but they don’t want to hear about their sins here in our contemporary

culture.”¹⁰ McGee continues to say that “there are many preachers today who are afraid to preach on the sins of Christians.”¹¹ The world is so full of sad news that to be bombarded by the condemnation of sin over and over again every Sunday is not a pleasant endeavor that the average person wants to endure. Sin is not a pleasant topic, but it is a reality and it must be addressed from the pulpit. When preachers do not preach on sin, the youth think of them as not having the strength of character to stand up for the gospel. The young people in the AEYF are theologically aware and wish to learn about the full scope of Biblical teaching, including sin. For example, some youth have complained about one minister who did not preach on the problem of sin. After about two and a half years in the church, he finally preached on it and the young people were ecstatic. Two of them called me that same week simply to tell me how happy they were about the change in their pastor. Furthermore, they laud preachers who preach Jesus as the only way to salvation and freedom from bondage to sin. As the youth of the AEYF have grown in their maturity and theology, they place great value on the preaching ministry of the church. Youth seem to feel that their pastors are not trustworthy because the pastors do not preach the whole counsel of God.

Some of the ministers preach on sin but do not offer the hope of the cross and the resurrection. The cross is powerful and it is real. Christ’s work on the cross gives his followers the strength to live day to day in this world. The sacrifice on the cross provides salvation for humanity throughout eternity. But it is more than the cross that saves. Many people have been crucified and killed, but only one has risen. It is not simply

10. J. Vernon McGee, *Jesus: Centerpiece of Scripture*, 1st Edition ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 84.

11. McGee, *Jesus: Centerpiece of Scripture*, 35.

Christ's death, but his subsequent resurrection that is filled with power and hope. If the preacher finds no power in the cross and no hope in the resurrection, the youth will not have positive views of the minister. The ministers who preach on Jesus as the only way to salvation are the speakers that the youth request at every conference. They do not ask for the ministers who do not preach on problem of sin and the solution of the cross. They value courage, integrity and unselfishness.

As stated in Chapter 1, because of the small and close Armenian community, the older youth know of these situations and speak of them and the ministers involved. The youth are familiar with the Bible. They know that the Apostle Peter admonishes spiritual leaders to "be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve."¹² Selfish ambition and vain conceit have led to lowered levels of ethos for pastors. In the Armenian Evangelical community ministers are tempted towards selfish ambition because of the limited number of churches and senior pastorates. There are thirty churches and fellowships and a very limited job pool. Out of these thirty pastorates, only a few are high profile communities that offer high salaries. Ministers often seek positions based on salary. Some have conducted negotiations with two or three churches at the same time to manipulate a higher salary. Some ministers seek the prestige, power, and money of the "good" jobs and eschew the ones in less desirable locations or those with less desirable pay. It is not a coincidence that the churches in big cities that offer big salaries have ministers and the smaller churches with smaller salaries

12. 1 Peter 5:2.

have empty pulpits. Some people see the focus on career advancement and monetary success and lower their view of the ethos of the minister.

Vain conceit manifests itself in both noticeable and subtle ways. Some ministers always need to be in charge. For example, they might preach the English sermon, which is more prestigious than the Armenian sermon, even when they have guest ministers. They might officiate at every baptism and wedding even against the request of the family involved. One minister was asked if another minister, the uncle of the child being baptized, could perform the baptism. He agreed but asked that the minister gain standing within his denomination. The uncle went through the rigid process and was accepted in the denomination. When the day of the baptism came, the minister did not allow the uncle to do the baptism. He did it all. The youth who were there asked me why the uncle did not perform the ceremony. They are young but they are not without intelligence. Another minister agreed to have the aunt of the groom take part in the wedding ceremony. When the aunt, a fellow minister with standing in the Armenian Evangelical Union, came to the wedding, she was told that she would not be able to participate. I agree with Sunukjian that “a preacher who is not building his own reputation...and who freely pushes others to occupy the spotlight is a man who is liked and listened to.”¹³ There are some in our Union who constantly seek the spotlight. One parishioner, in speaking of their minister, told me “he will never get off his chair.” This is an Armenian saying that means that the minister will never give up his seat of power and will rarely allow others to preach from his pulpit.

13. Donald Sunukjian, “The Credibility of the Preacher,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1982): 262.

Another issue is that a perception exists among the Armenian Evangelical community that some pastors are focused on money and power. This could be personal salary or church donations. Some ministers complain that the church's money is given to the youth. This amount is small, often totaling only one to three thousand dollars a year. These same ministers supervise the spending of fifty to one hundred times that amount on superficial additions to the church.¹⁴ One year we went to a church for mission project. About twenty of us worked tirelessly for a week. We painted the sanctuary, refurbished the kitchen, cleaned the pews and renovated the church. Each of us also paid for the food we ate and for much of the materials that went into the renovation. The next year, we planned a project in a different church. The minister of the first church, even as he enjoyed the benefits of the mission project, would not allow his youth to ask the church for money so that they could attend the next project. He did not want any money to go out from the church when it could come into the church.

While it may not be true, some ministers are perceived to be “greedy for money” and as a result have a lower level of ethos with the youth. “Our Pastor is only concerned about money and fundraising” were the words from one sixteen year old youth last year. A youth leader told me, “No one oversees the Bible studies or activities; they just care if I do fundraising.” If a minister or his church is seen as greedy for money, he has a noticeably lower level of ethos with not only the youth in their church, but the youth in

14. In the last decade, several of the fifteen AEUNA churches have built new churches or have undergone major renovation. One church built a 2 million dollar new church, with no youth room. Another church built a 1.5 million dollar new church, with no youth room. Another church embarked on a \$400 000 kitchen renovation, with no youth room. Another church redid their kitchen at a cost of \$450 000 but again, no youth room. One church spent \$230 000 on a new organ when old one was not broken and spent another \$200 000 on renovations with no dedicated youth room. Only church that is different spent \$100 000 in HVAC renovation, \$6000 for youth room (with 3 kids of youth group age.)

the community. But a pastor who is generous with his monies or his goods, a pastor who worries about spiritual matters and not financial matters, is seen as being Christlike, his ethos, especially in comparison to others, is very high.

Survey of Armenian Evangelical Pastors and Seminarians

Since this thesis project is about the role of the preacher's ethos is retaining Armenian Evangelical youth, I surveyed Armenian Evangelical ministers to have a better understanding of their views on ethos and the character of the preacher. This survey was done online and was filled out by 15 pastors and seminarians. The fifteen pastors were nearly uniform with respect to many of the answers in this survey. This surprised me because these pastors differ in their ages, educational backgrounds, theology, ministry styles and manifestations of their spirituality.

They agree on the issue of integrity with every one of them believing that integrity is as important as the sermon. They agree that the message of the gospel is incarnated in the preacher. They believe that the audience needs to trust in the preacher. They strive to live out their faith as they realize that they have to live what they preach. Across the board, ethos is a valuable aspect of their ministry. Many change their speaking style (and clothing choice) to suit different audiences.

Table 9: Importance of Audience Trusting Speaker

Importance of audience trust in speaker	
Very Important	15
Somewhat Important	0
Matters little	0

Table 10: Importance of Integrity

Importance of integrity to sermon process	
Not really important, it is the message that matters	0
Important as message is incarnated in the preacher	1
Essential, we have to live what we preach	14

Table 11: Most Important Aspect of Preaching

Most important aspect of preaching	
Preparation	0
Delivery	1
Integrity of preacher	4
Message of sermon	10

They were asked “what are ways to get the audience to trust you?” The answers they gave are all ways that increase ethos with an audience. If they did all of these, their ethos would be high.

Table 12: Ways to Inspire Trust

Ways to get an audience to trust you.
Personal illustrations
Testimony
Competence
Conviction (passion about subject)
Preparation
Goal is to get them to see God not you so be genuine
Humility in approach to text
Word of mouth, references
Good introduction by someone they know
Affirmation of their values
Speaking the truth
Preach in faith
Eye contact

The survey of the ministers was quite instructive. It showed unity in understanding both the preaching task and the community. The ministers are aware that their character is an important factor in their ministry. However, when we compare this survey with the composite picture I sketched above, there seems to be a discrepancy in

their awareness of the importance of ethos and the actual practice of ministry, whether it is preaching ministry or youth ministry. I argue that this disconnect is part of the reason for the youth leaving the church. They believe that integrity is important but some do not show it with their lives and in their ministries. This is helpful for future dealings with them and the discussions we might have on my thesis. They value ethos and might listen to suggestions on how to increase their ethos with the youth. Since they believe ethos is important, they might be more likely to listen to the suggestions in Chapter 5. The survey of the youth about the ministers was equally useful.

The Impact of Ethos in the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship

This survey, like the survey of the ministers, was done online. However, this was anonymous. The answers given by the youth are almost unanimous when dealing with the integrity of their favorite speaker and speakers in general. They believe that the integrity of a preacher is essential to the preaching task. This is yet another set of results that confirm that Armenian Evangelical Youth value the ethos of their ministers.

Table 13: Youth Views on Their Favorite Speaker

The integrity of the speaker:	
Very important	19
Somewhat important	0
Not very important (it is the message that matters)	1

This chapter has revealed that youth are leaving and that one cause is the low ethos of the ministers. The surveys show that the youth who are in our churches have high views of their ministers while the youth who have left do not. While this information was very useful, information by itself does not bring about change. In the next chapter, I will list outcomes from this thesis project and outline ways of bringing about change in the AEUNA.

CHAPTER 5: OUTCOMES

This thesis states that the Armenian Evangelical youth can be retained if preachers have a positive ethos with the youth. The previous chapter showed the project design which included surveys, analyses of AEYF directories, and my analysis of churches who have retained youth. In this chapter I describe the possible outcomes of this thesis-project.

What We Have Learned from this Project

This thesis-project has analyzed the core of the AEUNA churches because the thesis was on the churches, the ministers, and the youth of the Armenian Evangelical community. It is hard on the heart to analyze an active congregation and recognize its flaws. It is even harder to realize that the AEUNA has lost approximately four out of every five youth in the last quarter century. A significant majority of our young people know of youth who have left the church because of issues with the pastor's ethos. In the same study, we saw that a full quarter of those who filled out the survey no longer attend an AEUNA church even though they have friends in the churches and are connected through AEYF conferences and camps. But the good news is that many of the active youth who still attend have high views of the ethos of their minister. This group of youth is more connected to the church and the AEUNA than previous generations of young people.

How This Thesis-Project Can Help Retain AEUNA Youth

The bad news is that only a handful of churches have weekly youth groups. The good news in the AEYF is that youth are zealously attending conferences and are interested in their spiritual development. The ministers have high ethos with the youth

that are remaining in the churches. The issue will be, as it has been for the previous generation, the retention of these young people as they grow older. The added problem is that in ten of the fifteen churches, there is no weekly youth ministry. The five churches that have weekly Bible studies do not have ministries to all the young people in their church. Some only cater to the Junior High and High School groups, others have no youth group, and still others minister to all ages of youth. One of the outcomes from this thesis project will be to encourage the churches to start minister led youth ministries.

AEUNA churches need to take the positive ethos of their new active ministers and develop solid youth ministries in their churches. Four churches are looking for ways to begin regular youth group activities. I have spoken to all four church youth on visits to their churches and the four ministers all have positive ethos with their youth. They should all meet with their youth regularly and build up on their ethos through interactions with the young people. The vision for the AEYF is to have viable youth groups at all churches that have youth and this will begin with the vision and work of the senior pastors. I would like to visit the churches and their leadership teams to provide a theology of youth ministry that incorporates the whole church body. I hope to outline the theology of youth ministry and present a model of youth ministry that the churches can use. This model would suggest youth ministry as a work of the minister and the church as a whole and not a small group of individuals. This is not a common theme in the Armenian Evangelical Union. The churches would benefit from a new vision of a united community and united ministries. Young people can add to the resource base of the church as well as to the enthusiasm level of ministries. AEUNA churches can benefit from the injection of enthusiastic young people engaging with the older congregation. To foster this growth,

the Armenian Evangelical church should take ownership of the youth in their church and commission their ministers to be the spiritual shepherds of the whole flock of God's people, not just the older members.

Table 14: Youth Groups in the AEUNA

Church	Youth Group (JH, HS, College, Post College)	Weekly, Monthly, Irregular
Chicago, IL	No	No
Detroit, Mi	JH, HS	Irregular working on regular
Havertown, PA	JH, HS	Regular
Salem, MA	JH, HS	Irregular
Providence, RI	JH, HS	Monthly
Cambridge, ON	No	No
Montreal, QC	No	No
New York, NY	No	No
Troy, NY	No	No
Worcester, MA	No	No
Belmont, MA	All	Weekly
Montreal First, QC	All	Weekly
Paramus, NJ	JH, HS	Weekly
Toronto, ON	JH, HS, College (They say it's for all these ages but the group that attends is mostly post college.)	Weekly
Watertown, MA	All (joint with Belmont, Belmont minister does the college/career group)	Weekly

Presenting the Findings from this Thesis-Project to the Ministers

I hope to present these findings at an AEUNA Pastors' Retreat. I will suggest ways that the ministers can raise or their ethos with the youth. I will start with the answers the youth gave on how the preachers can raise their ethos during the church

service and beyond. The youth were articulate with their answers which revolved around the minister caring about youth. This includes preaching sermons that relate to youth and showing interest in the young people of the church. Every sermon cannot target the needs of every age group, but once in a while the youth should be the focal point of the sermon. A crucial step is to include the youth in the worship service. If a number of young people participate in the service and lend their gifts for the glory of God, the rest of the youth will feel more at home in the service and ultimately in the church. The young people will identify the church as their church and not just their parent's church. The older parishioners will see the youth in church and will be more likely to give the youth church resources. These resources include prayer, leaders, physical space and a community that values them. I will also discuss the need for a safe haven in the church where adolescents can develop their identity, make Biblical decisions and build relationships. I have discussed these issues with many church leaders and youth workers but have not had the chance to speak to the ministers as a group.

The hardest part of changing the atmosphere of the AEUNA churches to get them to focus on youth is will be to persuade the pastors that they need to take a firmer stance with regards to the resources (moneys, facilities, and time) of the church as it relates to youth. As I stated earlier, most of our churches spend very little money and resources on youth ministry. Youth ministry is not a budgeted item in a majority of our churches. As was introduced in this chapter, the amount of money spent upgrading churches or building new churches without adding any facilities that the youth can call their own is staggering. The young people view themselves as outcasts who cannot use parts of the churches because they might dirty or damage a room, but a proper view of stewardship

suggests that facilities are made to be used. Another related issue is that some of our churches rent out their facilities to other organizations and the church hall or gym or youth room is not available when the youth group would like to use it. The youth feel like second class citizens without a safe place to develop their identity. Ministers can raise their ethos by courageously fighting for the youth at the church leadership level.

Another way to increase ethos with youth is through the ministry of preaching. I have heard a number of complaints about the preaching of AEUNA ministers. A good way to raise ethos would be to improve the weekly sermons. This is accomplished through better preparation, eye contact, content, and more in depth Biblical preaching. Pastors can “gain credibility [and increase their ethos if they are] clear and organized”¹ in their preaching. Furthermore, Armenian Evangelical ministers either do not preach on sin at all, or instead preach on sin and “you need Jesus or else you will go to hell” almost every week. As I visit the churches, I find myself listening to the latter sermon on a myriad of occasions. I like the gospel as much as the next fellow, but if I was a parishioner and heard the elemental teachings of the gospel more than a handful of times a year, I would find myself spiritually malnourished.

Another way to increase ethos is to spend time with the youth. I think this is where many of our ministers are lacking. They can raise their good will if they spend time with the youth because “deep trust requires long run proximity.”² I agree with Sunukjian on this issue so much I have quoted him twice. Sunukjian states that the minister’s “potential for effectiveness is great when the listener can make the two fold

1. Donald Sunukjian, “The Credibility of the Preacher,” *Biblicotheca Sacra* (1982): 259.

2. Timothy Keller, “Preacher,” *A Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 12, no. 3 (Spring, 1994), 29.

statement, “I like him and he likes me.”³ Incarnational ministry demands a flesh and blood minister. Union churches are suffering from a lack of youth leadership. As the spiritual head of the body of Christ, the minister must not only see this need but meet this need. Delegation is an important aspect of this as the minister casts a vision for a unified church with a thriving ministry to young people but it starts with the shepherd. The minister’s care for the youth in the church is often contagious and has the ability to quickly spread to the rest of the body. The adults will pray for and invest in the youth ministry if the shepherd is invested in it. Youth will stay connected to the church if they form important relationships in the church with others their age and with adult members of the congregation. They will stay connected if they know that the minister likes them and cares for them. By doing this, the minister follows the awe inspiring example of Christ. McDill stresses this and says that, “The person of Christ, as fully God and fully man, serves as a model for all ministry. In preaching this model portrays the two elements of truth and personality. The very Word of God is proclaimed by a very human agent. This is God’s method of making himself known.”⁴

In this thesis, I studied the communities of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America in order to discern the role of the preacher’s ethos in retaining youth. A related endeavor was to find a solution to the disconnection of the young people from the churches. As we move forward in 2010, my prayers are that the churches take the information provided by this thesis and find new ways to reach the young people in their communities. The role of the ministers is significant as they are the shepherds responsible

3. Sunukjian, *The Credibility of the Preacher* 1982, 261.

4. Wayne McDill, *The Moment of Truth: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1999), 25.

for the leading and feeding of God's sheep. The ministers who are in our churches now have high levels of ethos and I pray that they take ownership of the whole ministry of God's people and find ways to keep connected to the youth of today for the glory of God and the benefit of the Armenian Evangelical church. May God raise up a generation of pastors with high levels of ethos that seek the good of the entire church community and are able to reconnect the youth to the AEUNA.

APPENDIX A: AEYF PLUS SURVEY: AEUNA MINISTERS

	Really Bad	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Exceptional
As a parent	2%	8%	27%	35%	19%	10%
As a preacher	4%	13%	25%	25%	27%	6%
As a teacher	0%	10%	31%	24%	29%	6%
Kids of ministers	8%	13%	25%	19%	27%	8%
Competent - Ministry	0%	6%	28%	22%	38%	6%
Competent - Non Ministry	0%	8%	31%	24%	33%	4%
Fashion sense	8%	10%	50%	25%	4%	4%
Godly wisdom	0%	6%	22%	24%	35%	14%
Hard working	0%	4%	31%	24%	25%	16%
Honesty	8%	10%	13%	10%	29%	29%
Integrity	11%	11%	11%	9%	34%	26%
Likeable	0%	8%	25%	15%	25%	27%
Love for family	0%	0%	21%	17%	30%	32%
Love for the congregation	0%	12%	18%	16%	30%	24%
Love for the youth	4%	6%	24%	16%	8%	42%
Time spent with youth	8%	14%	28%	10%	18%	22%
Selfless	4%	11%	22%	24%	26%	13%
Steward of money	4%	15%	22%	33%	17%	9%
Theological knowledge	0%	2%	22%	26%	36%	14%
Trust with a secret	4%	17%	13%	17%	28%	20%
Trust with money	4%	9%	20%	20%	36%	11%
Well read	0%	8%	18%	22%	43%	10%
Worldly wisdom	0%	6%	22%	31%	37%	4%
Zealous for God's work	0%	4%	16%	18%	41%	20%

APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS OF AEYF DIRECTORIES: 1986-2010

Church	1986	2010	20102	%
	in AEUNA	in same church	in AEUNA	% retained in church
Salem, NH	29	0	0	0
Watertown, MA	10	0	1	0%
Worcester, MA	11	3	0	27%
Troy, NY				
New York, NY	21	0	2	0%
Havertown, PA	31	3		10%
Belmont, MA	34	6	1	18%
Providence, RI	8	2		25%
Cambridge, ON				
Toronto, ON	33	9	4	27%
Montreal First, PQ	21	3	3	14%
Montreal, PQ	30	5		17%
Paramus, NJ	85	12	3	14%
Southfield, MI	47	1		2%
Chicago, IL	5	1	1	20%
	365	45	15	12%

APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS OF AEYF DIRECTORIES: 1993-2010

Church	1993	2010	20102	%
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	in AEUNA	in same church	in AEUNA	% retained in church
Salem, NH	23	0	0	0%
Watertown, MA	41	3	2	7%
Worcester, MA	7	2	0	29%
Troy, NY	25	0	0	0%
New York, NY	4	0	0	0%
Havertown, PA	4	0	0	0%
Belmont, MA	19	5	1	26%
Providence, RI	9	1	0	11%
Cambridge, ON				
Toronto, ON	30	9	1	30%
Montreal First, PQ	28	11	0	39%
Montreal, PQ	12	2	2	17%
Paramus, NJ	34	5	3	15%
Southfield, MI	21	2	0	10%
Chicago, IL	10	0	0	0%
	267	40	9	15%

APPENDIX D: ANALYSIS OF AEYF DIRECTORIES: 2002-2010

Church	2002	2010	^2010	%
		in same	in	%
	in AEUNA	church	AEUNA	retained
				in church
Church	Percentage of Youth Retained			
Salem, NH				
Watertown, MA	33	11	1	33%
Worcester, MA	2	0	0	0%
Troy, NY	11	1	1	9%
New York, NY				
Havertown, PA	18	3	0	17%
Belmont, MA	26	9	0	35%
Providence, RI	6	5	1	83%
Cambridge, ON				
Toronto, ON				
Montreal First, PQ	39	19	1	49%
Montreal, PQ				
Paramus, NJ	19	6	0	32%
Southfield, MI				
Chicago, IL	7	2	1	29%
	161	56	5	35%

APPENDIX E: AEUNA CHURCH RETENTION AVERAGES

Salem, NH	0%
Watertown, MA	14%
Worcester, MA	19%
Troy, NY	3%
New York, NY	0%
Havertown, PA	9%
Belmont, MA	26%
Providence, RI	40%
Cambridge, ON	No Data for any year
Toronto, ON	19%
Montreal First, PQ	34%
Montreal, PQ	11%
Paramus, NJ	20%
Southfield, MI	4%
Chicago, IL	16%
	15%

APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF AEYF (12-25) YOUTH

Name (Optional)

Church Affiliation

Number of Conferences attended

Number of Camp Arevelks attendee

List some of your favorite speakers

What was your initial response to the speaker? Circle the most appropriate response

Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive
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What was the speaker wearing? Circle the most appropriate response

suit, tie	dress shirt, slacks	khakis, polo	shorts, jeans / t-shirt
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What were some things you knew about the speaker beforehand?

Does your favorite speaker have integrity?

Would it matter if the speaker was a liar or a cheat?

How often do you go to church on Sunday mornings?

Every week	Monthly	Once in a while
------------	---------	-----------------

what is your view of your minister as a person/ example of Christian?

Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive
---------------	----------	---------	----------	---------------

If the preaching was excellent, would you go to church more often?

Where do you see yourself attending church in 10 years? Why?

--

Does your minister know your name? Age?

--

Has he ever been to your house?

--

Would you trust him with a secret?

--

List positive characteristics of your minister

--

If you know any youth who have left the church circle why they have left. (all that apply)

Politics of church	Worship Service	Minister	Youth Group	Personality	Conflict
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Does your minister exhibit these characteristics Circle all that apply.

Wisdom	Competence	Intelligence	Virtue	Niceness	Caring	Good preaching
--------	------------	--------------	--------	----------	--------	----------------

Which one or two of the ones listed in the last question is more important? Why?

--

Does the preacher and the preaching matter when you are choosing a church? Why or why not?

--

What changes would you like to see in your church? Your church worship service?

--

What can your minister do for you to think more highly of him?

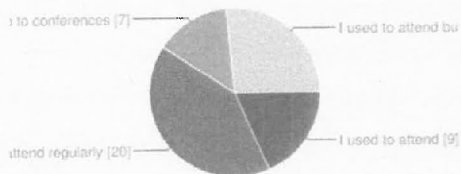
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APPENDIX G: ONLINE SURVEY ABOUT DISCONNECT FROM AEUNA CHURCHES

50 responses

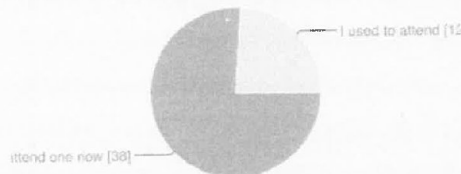
Summary [See complete responses](#)

AEYF



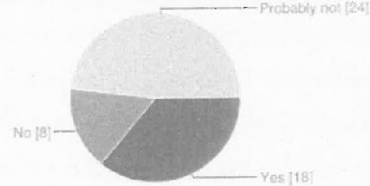
I used to attend	9	18%
I attend regularly	20	41%
I sometimes go to conferences	7	14%
I used to attend but now I'm too old	13	27%

Armenian Evangelical Church (AEUNA)



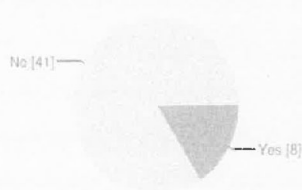
I attend one now	38	76%
I used to attend	12	24%

Would you attend a church if you didn't like the minister?



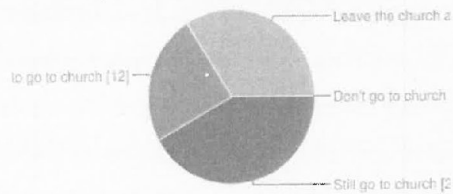
Yes	18	36%
No	8	16%
Probably not	24	48%

Would you attend a church if you thought the minister did not have integrity?



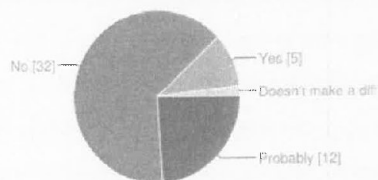
Yes	8	16%
No	41	84%

What would you do if the minister did not preach well?



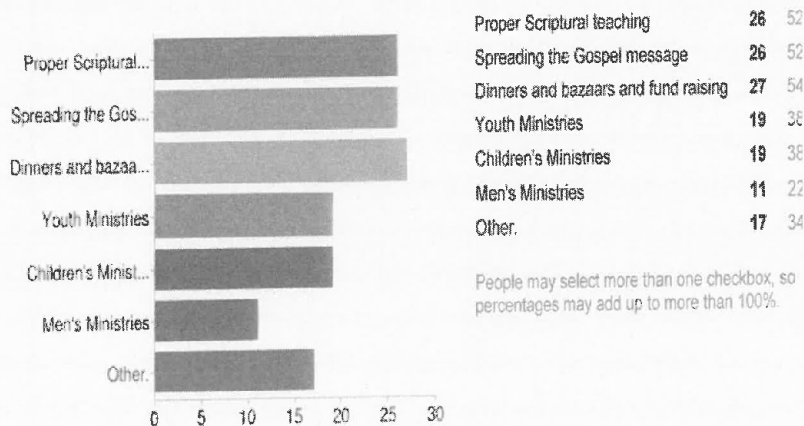
Still go to church
Teach Sunday School so you wouldn't have to go
Leave the church and go to another church
Don't go to church

Would you attend a church if the minister was a liar or cheated on his taxes?



Probably
No
Yes
Doesn't make a difference, I can learn from anyone

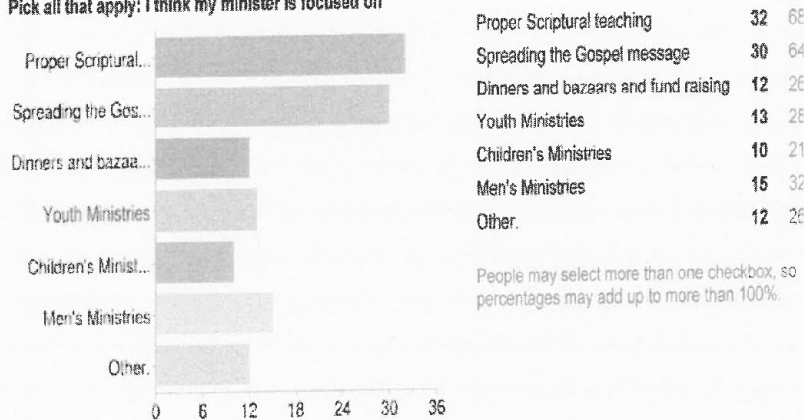
Pick all that apply: I think my church is focused on



If you put other for the above question, please elaborate.

era Women's MinistryMoms and Babies MinistryWorship Team MinistryMissions Ministry they are also focused on women's ministries Money. It has become a business and is no longer a church. Missions and outreach Worship this days i do attend when i have time and it does not matter to anyone they dont even relise that i was not there. and until last year i was involve kids ministry. and looking for new local church to go to. My church is in a state of chaos due to its previous minister and due to several individuals that continue to be a disruptive force. One of the duties of a mini ...

Pick all that apply: I think my minister is focused on

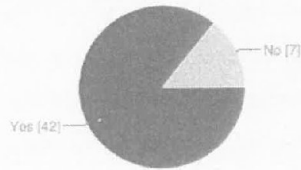


If you put other for the above question, please elaborate.

i would say my church focuses on Spiritual Teaching. but the Proper yea... don't know if i would go that far His own agenda, oblivious or too self involved to care about the needs of his flock. Money, manipulation and lies. My minister tries to focus on all of the different ministries at church... his personal Goals and Dreams... My minister is

the guy that married me and my wife. He is old now but, when he was in the game, used to be focused on all the above. He's involved in every aspect of the church. The pastor is missionally-oriented. Music ministry and Prayer ministry Adult ministries (not ...

Do you know any youth who have left an AEUNA church because they did not value the character of the minister?



Yes	42	86%
No	7	14%

Number of daily responses



APPENDIX H: MINISTRIES OF THE AEYF

The Ministries of the Armenian
Evangelical Youth Fellowship
of the Eastern Region

Reverend Ara Jizmejian

The Mission of the AEYF

Glorify God by:

Preaching Christ

Developing Disciples

Building Leaders

Means:

•Planning AEYF conferences that promote a spirit of unity in Christ, always include Biblical teaching and preaching and are well organized.

Means:

•Working with the our Union churches, their youth leaders and the AEYF Executive Committee to help them provide stable Godly leadership and solid Biblical teaching to their respective youth groups.

AEYF Youth Ministry

Annual Activities of the AEYF

Conference	Average Attendance
Leaders	15
AEYF -	20
Seniors'	20-45
Juniors'	60-130
Summer	60-100
Leadership	20-25
Camp Training	10-15
Camp Arevelk	70-95 (plus 20-30 staff)
Fall	70-130
Executive Committee Meetings	7 (3-5 times a year)

AEUNA Eastern Region Youth Groups

Church (best estimates as of printing)	Actual weekly	Potential
Belmont	10	25
Watertown	10	25
Toronto	5	30
Montreal 1	25	40
Montreal	0	25
Cambridge	0	2
Philadelphia	0	8
Paramus	15	25
New York	0	2
Thny	0	5
Worcester	0	10
Salem	0	10
Chicago	0	12
Detroit	0	10
Providence	0	2
<u>Total:</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>231</u>

Youth Group Frequency

Churches with weekly youth groups:

1. Paramus
2. Belmont
3. Watertown
4. Montreal 1
5. Toronto

Churches with monthly youth groups:

1. Salem
2. Detroit

Churches with no regular youth groups:

1. Cambridge
2. Worcester
3. New York
4. Troy
5. Montreal
6. Chicago
7. Providence

Youth Ministry Needs of Each Church

Church	Requested Number of Visits	Youth Ministry Needs
Belmont	4	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, Advice on needs in youth ministry, Seminars time with youth, youth leader training
Cambridge	0	
Chicago	4	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, One Day Retreat and Luncheon, Support for youth leaders
Detroit	2	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, Advice on youth ministry needs, Seminars with students, pastor
Montreal 1	2	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, Leader Training, One Day Retreat
Montreal	2	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, Visit, AEYF, Advice on needs in youth ministry, Leader training, Luncheon, One Day Retreat
New York	0	
Paramus	2	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, Leader training
Philadelphia	2	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, Help with finding a youth leader
Providence	0	
Salem	2	Visit, Youth Resource, Speaker, AEYF, More communications with New England area churches, Regional Conferences
Toronto	2	Visit, Youth Resource, Visit, Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, Leader training, Speaker
Troy	0	
Watertown	4	Visit, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEYF, Advice on Youth Group needs, Leader training
Worcester	0	Visit, Youth Resource, Speaker, AEYF, Bible Studies

Online Survey Results from our church youth and church leaders

Church	Answers from online survey (filled out by youth leaders and youth members on survey)
Belmont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure, Curriculum, Leader Training, Help with problems • Curriculum, Help with youth, Help with problems • Help with problems • Structure • Help with problems • Curriculum • Help with problems
Chicago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure, more visits, continue the work of the spiritual growth and development of our youth. • Speaker, visit more frequently • Structure, youth minister in Chicago
Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader Training, Lead while teaching seminars, organize youth conferences and retreats, organize leadership training seminars, occasionally visit with the youth of our church, ask the church on how to organize a youth group program
Montreal 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker
Montreal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, Visits, AEFY, Advice on needs in youth ministry, Leader training, Listen, One Day Retreat.
Parsons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits, Youth Resource, Youth Group Structure, Speaker, AEFY, Leader training. • Structure • Leader training • Structure, emphasize to the church leadership the importance of the youth group. Also to relate to them the situation that the youth group truly is in now, along with how other youth groups are structured. • Leader Training • Speaker • Structure, visit our church once in a while • Leader training

Online Survey Results from our church youth and church leaders

Philadelphia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with problems, suggestions for finding a person to youth minister
Providence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure
Salem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits, Youth Resource, Speaker, AEFY, More communication with New England area churches, Regional Conferences
Toronto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure, Curriculum • Structure • Speaker, create a belonging that is greater than their immediate youth group • Structure • Help with problems, making regular visits and being involved in the youth in my city, making recommendations for improvement in youth group curriculum and structure • Leader training • Leader training, try to catch more often maybe with monthly check-ups and visits • Curriculum, visitation, teaching
Watertown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure, curriculum
Worcester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader training • Structure, help with organization, find a place, meet members • Structure

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